Tuesday 18 November 2025

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DECEMBER 2025

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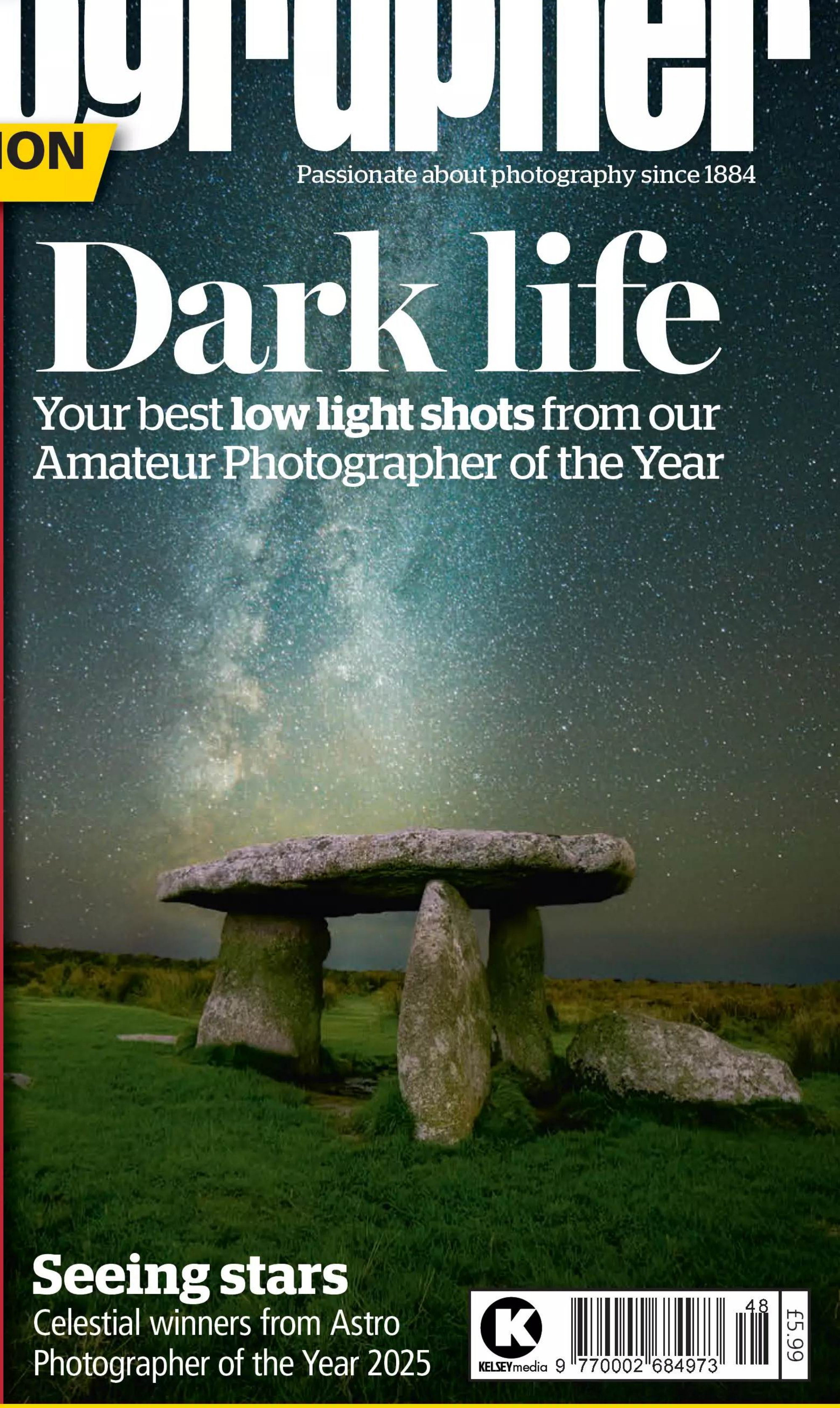

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A celebration of female fortitude

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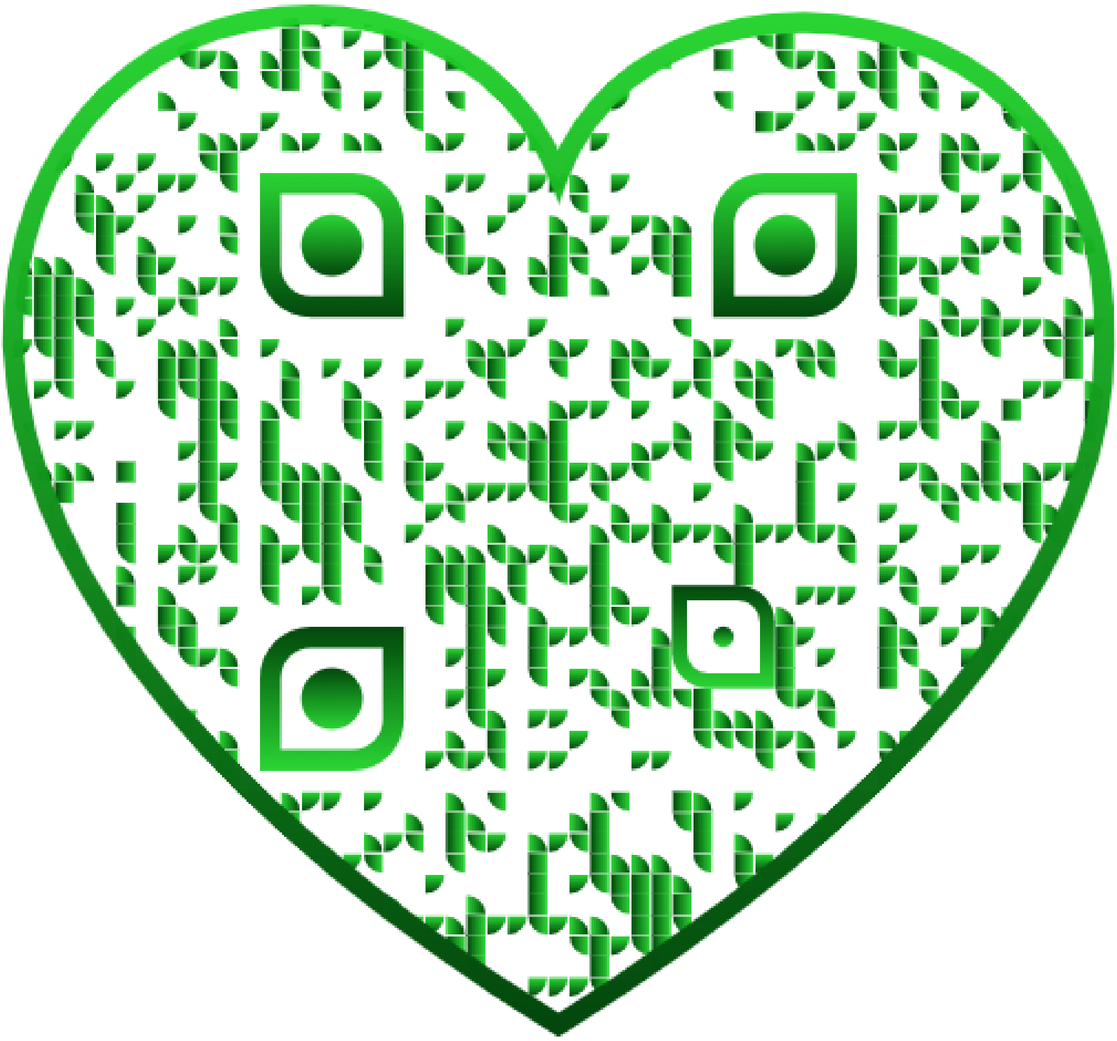

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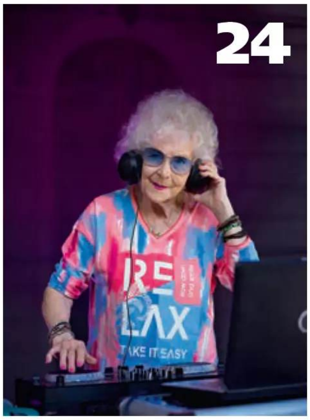
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THE ANDROMEDA CORE © WEITANG LIANG, QI YANG, CHUHONG YU

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Welcome

This issue we span topics as diverse as astrophotography, motorsport (on a cheap 35mm compact camera!), portraits of inspirational women around the world, and a project documenting George Orwell's house. We test five Godox Lux flashguns, two hotshoe light meters and a new Viltrox lens. With Christmas just around the bend we present our annual round-up of top accessories that we recommend as gifts, for giving or receiving. There's sure to be something on our list you'll love. Alternatively how about buying a ticket to our next *Festival of Photography* in January? The early bird ticket sale ends on 23 November – see page 45. Don't forget that a subscription to AP makes a great gift too. See page 22.

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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COVER PICTURE © ETHAN SCORER. INSET PICTURE, WOMEN OF THE WORLD © MIHAELA NOROC

Our cover image by Ethan Scorer was a runner-up in the Low Light round of APOY 2025. See page 58 for all the winners

Subscribe and save!
See page 22 for our special Xmas offer

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

Andy recommends the best photo accessories at all budgets in our Xmas gift guide

JESSICA MILLER
Dep Online Editor

Jessica presents the winners of Astronomy Photographer of the Year

PETER DENCH
Acting Features Ed

Peter writes about a book redefining women and beauty – then brings you NASCAR on film

AILSA MCWHINNIE

APOY Low Light round winners; and Ailsa finds out more about where Orwell wrote *1984*

ANGELA NICHOLSON

The AP reguar tests the Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air lens for APS-C format cameras

NIGEL ATHERTON
Editor

Nigel puts the Lux range of retro flashguns from Godox to the test

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© JOEL SARTORE

'Gelada baboons at Parco Natura Viva in Bussolengo, Italy', by Joel Sartore, is amongst the prints on sale

Unique chance to buy prints from wildlife greats

THE INTERNATIONAL League of Conservation Photographers (iLCP) is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a limited-edition fine art print sale featuring more than 100 images of wildlife and habitats from some of the world's greatest conservation photographers. Many of the founding members of iLCP are featured in the print sale, including such big names as Cristina Mittermeier, Joel Sartore, Beverly Joubert, Annie Griffiths, and Art Wolfe.

Running until 27 November, the Prints for the Planet sale gives collectors the chance to own museum-quality prints from iLCP's global archive, with prices starting from $100 (£76) to $590 (£450). Funds raised through Prints for the Planet will directly support iLCP's mission to protect wild places, strengthen conservation initiatives, and empower the next generation of visual storytellers through its Emerging League program.

Regular AP readers will need no introduction to Joel Sartore, a stalwart *National Geographic* photographer who also founded the National Geographic Photo Ark project, while Art Wolfe has spent over 50 years documenting biodiversity and indigenous cultures.

For more information about this unique print sale, see bit.ly/wildlifeprintsale

DJI Osmo Mobile 8 lands

DJI has announced its latest flagship gimbal to help keep photos and videos stable, the Osmo Mobile 8.

Key additions include 360° horizontal panning, plus the ability to track cats and dogs. As with previous models, the Osmo Mobile 8 has three-axis image stabilisation, but the 360° horizonal rotation is a first.

Tracking technology for pets, people and objects is provided by the company's ActiveTrack 7.01 technology, which is part of the DJI Mimo app for iOS and Android. There is also support for Apple DockKit tracking tecnnology, which makes it easier to track subjects using the iPhone's camera. With Dual Lens Boost, the app uses both a phone's wideangle and telephoto lenses together to ensure the subject is never lost, no matter how fast the movement or how crowded the scene.

Meanwhile, Smart Capture can detect multiple subjects and makes it easy to switch between subjects, even in a complicated environment. There is also a Multifunctional Module, which attaches magnetically; it has an integrated light with temperature and brightness controls and also works as a microphone receiver.

The DJI Osmo Mobile 8 is available to buy now for £135.

The new DJI Osmo Mobile 8 gimbal

© GETTY IMAGES

Lest we forget

WITH the WW1 Remembrance Day commemorations still fresh in our minds, it's clear that 80 years after WW2 ended, the sacrifices of millions of people from Britain's colonies in both wars have been forgotten by many. Indeed, 23% of the British armed forces in WW1 were from India. Some 15,000 West Indians also volunteered to fight for Britain, while 680,000 Africans fought for Britain in WW2. Getty Images has a large archive on Commonwealth troops from both conflicts, and you can read our full article about this at bit.ly/warcontribution

1/5/42-Libya: British Indian troops examine a Nazi flag found among the rubble in the shallow axis trenches on the Western Desert. This picture was made after the capture of Libyan Omar

Going wide

Last Fireworks by Alessandro Cantarelli

PRINTER maker Epson has announced the winners of its 2025 International Pano Awards. The overall victor was Alessandro Cantarelli from Italy for his entries Last Fireworks, Jackpot and Mann. 'As the sun went down, the sky exploded,' says Cantarelli about Last Fireworks. 'Layer after layer of clouds lit up, painting the desert with fire and gold. Using my Sony A7 IV with a fisheye lens on a tripod, I captured a full multiexposure sequence at f/8 and ISO 100, rotating carefully around the nodal point to create a seamless 360° panorama.' Enter now for this year's contest and you can see all the winners at thepanoawards.com

Save on camera backpacks and more

THINK Tank has announced a winter promotion from now until 31 December, giving you the chance to save up to £120 on 18 camera backpacks and seven 'airport roller' cases.

Models include the BackLight backpacks, ranging from 18L to 45L capacity, and the Think Tank SpeedTop backpacks; with capacities of 20L or 30L, they can handle compact or full kits and offer easy bottom access. The best discount on the Airport rollers is £90 off the International v3.0 model. Full details are at bit.ly/thinktankdeals

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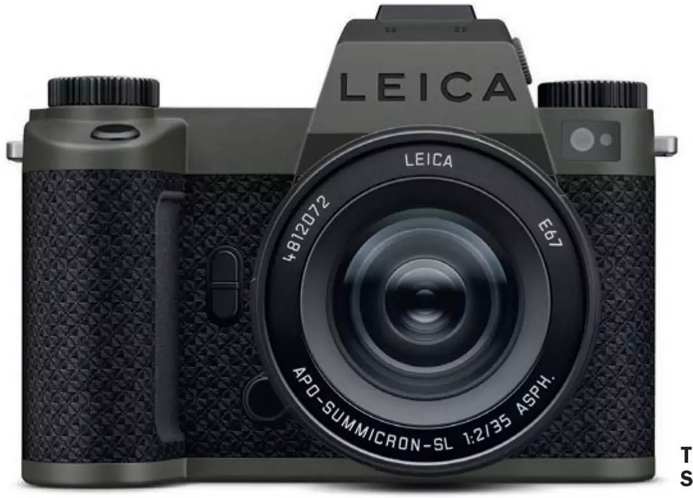

The Leica SL3 Reporter

Leica releases SL3 'Reporter' edition

LEICA has announced the launch of the Leica SL3 Reporter, a new addition to the company's Reporter design series.

The Leica SL3 Reporter is equipped with features that have been specifically designed for the harsh conditions of reportage and press photography, including a scratch-resistant dark green finish and an aramid fabric cover, which provide additional protection abrasion and the weather.

A special trim also offers significantly improved grip, and Leica being Leica, it looks better over time. 'The trim develops a unique patina that reflects the traces of its photographic journey and the character of a true reportage camera. The distinctive design is characterised by a combination of dark green paintwork with black control elements, and the absence of the red Leica logo, which serves to emphasise the SL3 Reporter's suitability for challenging working environments.'

Otherwise, this camera for roving reporters is the same as the standard Leica SL3, featuring a 60MP full-frame sensor, up to 15fps continuous shooting (5fps with continuous autofocus) and 8K video recording.

The SL3 Reporter is available now for £6,200 from Leica stores, the Leica online store and specialist retailers.

The eyes have it

THE INTERNATIONAL Association for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) has announced the winners of the 10th annual World Sight Day Photo Competition. 'Shakul's Eyes' by Marijn Fidder from Uganda was named the Professional Photo of the Year, while 'Makalika and her son post-surgery' by Darren James from Samoa won through as the Amateur Photo of the Year.

The winners were selected from more than 500 entries across over 60 countries, and the judging panel included AP's Deputy Online Editor, Jessica Miller. Commenting on the winning image, she said: 'This photograph has stuck with me since I first saw it in the first round of judging. It stands out for its exceptional composition, emotional depth and technical precision. The lighting and focus on the eye and surrounding features are technically spot on.'

The organisers added: 'This year's competition showcased the beauty, diversity, and impact of eye health when it is available, accessible and affordable to all.' For all the winners, see bit.ly/sightphotocontest

© MARIJN FIDDER

World Sight Day Photo contest winner

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Viewpoint
Craig Grannell

Why iPhone has always been a game-changer for photography, reckons tech writer Craig

I remember the uproar when iPhone photos began dominating Flickr. That first iPhone had a 2MP camera and no zoom! Why would anyone think it was a proper camera? Yet before long, I'd ditched my digital camera too, and used my iPhone for everything. I still do. Because from the start, Apple got the fundamentals right – and has pushed photography forward ever since. Here's how.

Apple's strength lies in control. By owning hardware and software and keeping to just a few models, it can fine-tune performance across the board. And having long ago decided cameras matter, Apple gives even the most affordable iPhone a high-quality sensor. The main camera in every iPhone on sale today is 48MP. Not bad.

Then there is the constant reinvention. Every iPhone launch gives cameras serious stage time. Apple never coasts; it redefines. I loved that this year's Pros got a 48MP telephoto to match the other lenses, bringing us more detailed zoom shots, while the iPhone 17's ultra-wide upgrade made macros stunningly sharp.

I also admire Apple's commitment to realism. To me, iPhone photos look natural – detailed and dynamic, without tipping into artificial. And in an age of AI, Apple's careful to enhance reality rather than fabricate it. Your iPhone can clean a blemish but won't fake a moon – unlike Samsung Space Zoom in 2023.

Democratising Hollywood

Stills are great but video captures life. Watching my kid grow. Remembering my dog's bark. Priceless. But iPhone goes above and beyond, putting Hollywood-grade tech in your hands (literally: film-makers increasingly use iPhones on set) with 4K, Action and Cinematic modes, gorgeous slo-mo and video macro.

To me, iPhone photography feels effortless yet empowering. Non-destructive editing lets anyone experiment without risk. Capture presets ('Photographic Styles') let people tailor output to their tastes. And I've grown used to the Camera Control button, which gives me DSLR-like precision and gestural controls for quickly switching tools without ruining a shot.

© AMY DAVIES

iPhone 17 vs iPhone 17 Pro

Apple claims an iPhone 17 Pro has the equivalent of eight lenses. Technically it's three, but clever behind-the-scenes cropping provides fast access to popular focal lengths. I'm fine with that. I'd sooner tap and shoot than juggle lenses and modes and miss the moment.

No other platform matches iPhone's creative toolkit. I've spent years exploring handcrafted iPhone apps for manual control, playful toy cameras, multi-shot modes and quirky filters.

iPhone has always let you shoot, edit and share on one device, seamlessly. But crucially, it made all that fun.

To sum up, Apple looks ahead. Even entry-level iPhones capture high-res images and Live Photos with their snippets of video, while models with two or more cameras can record spatial video for tomorrow's smart glasses. And software evolves too: I was delighted by how Photos in iOS 26 can add a subtle parallax effect to any photo – another small but magical way to make my library feel alive.

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the email address on page 3 and win a year's digital subscription to AP.

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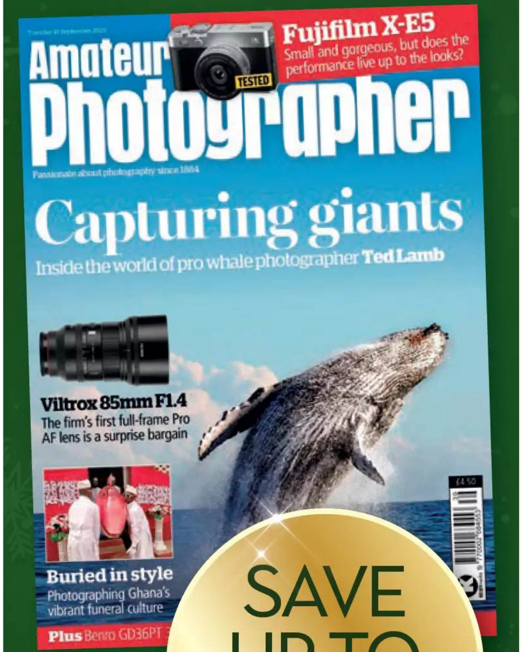
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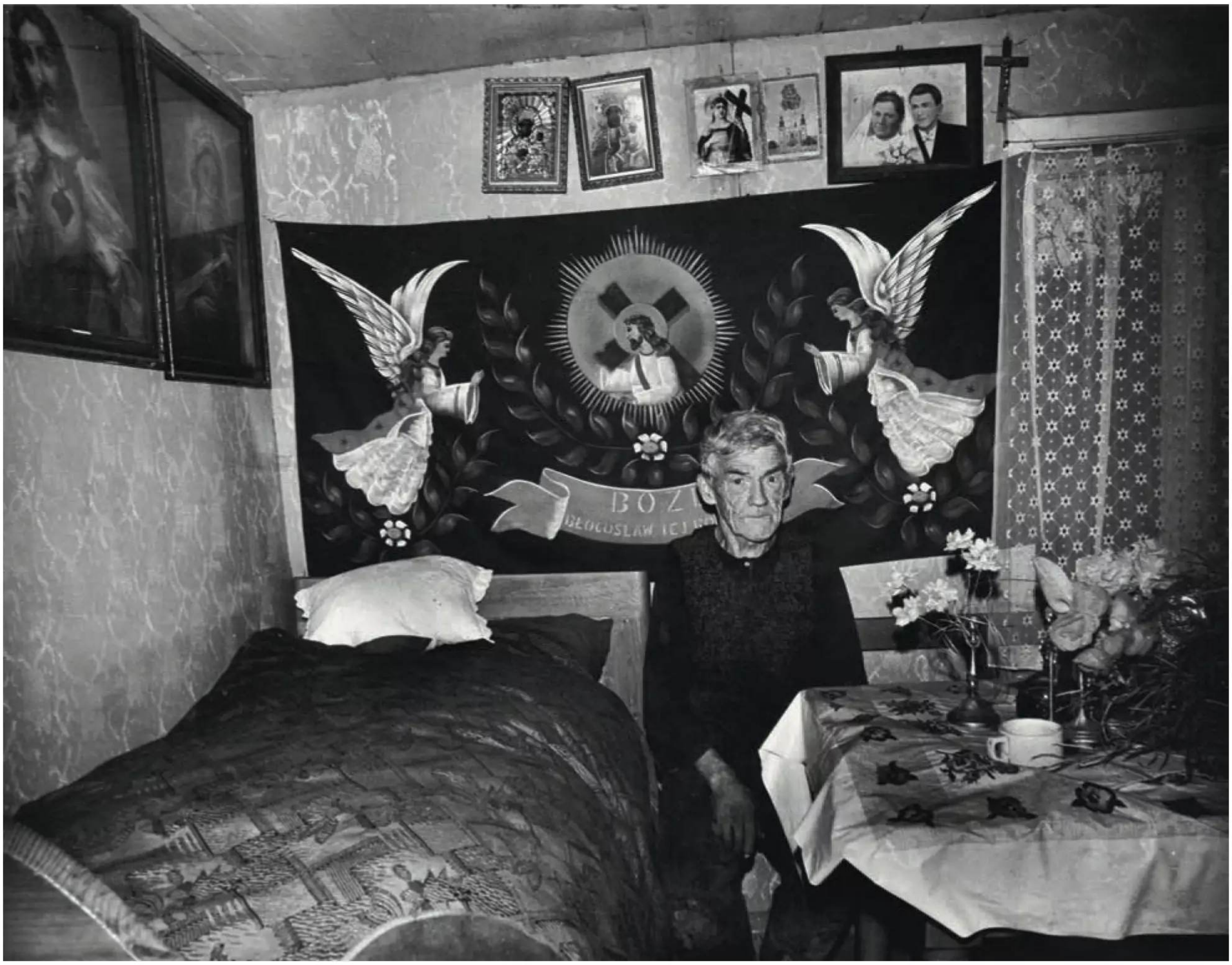

ALL IMAGES FROM SOCIOLOGICAL RECORD © ZOFIA RYDET, COURTESY OF THE ZOFIA RYDET FOUNDATION

Zofia Rydet: Sociological Record

The Photographers' Gallery, London, until 22 February 2026

This major exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery celebrates the grand opus of this Polish photographer, says **Geoff Harris**

Zofia Rydet (1911-1977) is probably one of the most famous Polish photographers you've never heard of, though she's rightfully celebrated in her home country. Zofia Rydet: Sociological Record, a new exhibition at the Photographers' Gallery, should rectify this.

From 1978 to 1990, Rydet photographed the interiors of a variety of Polish houses, (mostly) with the occupants. While Rydet also shot the dwellings of townspeople, much of the work was done in the countryside, creating a poignant record of a society undergoing rapid change. Sociological Record is strikingly direct in its approach: Rydet captures people, singly or in pairs, against a wall in their homes. The images were taken with a wideangle lens and a flash, maximising depth of field, and shot on black & white film. While revealing a rigorous compositional discipline, Rydet was not a particularly 'technical' photographer and was much more concerned about developing a rapport with her subjects. An avid walker, she worked hard to engage with her sitters and to put them at ease.

Rydet photographed kids, teens, village elders, faces lined from years of work and political upheaval. In the homes, religious paintings are a mainstay, reminding us of Poland's Catholic roots, as well as Communist icons (mainly there to keep visiting Party apparatchiks happy, we understand).

While coming very much from the humanist documentary tradition – Edward Steichen's book the *Family of Man* was a big influence – Rydet didn't have an overtly 'political' agenda. She was very much plugged into the Polish photographic community and taught photography in her later years.

If you think all this sounds a bit parochial, think again. This show is another reminder that great photo projects can be found close to home, as well as the importance of developing a consistent and coherent style. Rydet also had a prodigious work ethic; Sociological Record comprises over 20,000 negatives, though only a fraction were printed in Rydet's lifetime. It's a remarkable achievement considering she started the project aged 67 – so what's your excuse?

STING
THE POLICE
POLICE

Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography

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Lee Miller, Charlie Chaplin with Chandelier, St Moritz 1932. Lee Miller Archives

Lee Miller, Tate Britain

until 15 February 2026

Few photographers lived a life as adventurous, contradictory and radical as Lee Miller. This autumn, Tate Britain gives her the retrospective she has long deserved. With over 230 works spanning five decades, Lee Miller is the UK's most extensive survey of her practice to date, tracing her journey from surrealist muse to frontline war correspondent, fashion model to uncompromising image-maker.

Born in Poughkeepsie in 1907, Miller first emerged as a model in New York, photographed by Edward Steichen and Cecil Beaton. But her ambitions lay behind the camera. In Paris, she worked with Man Ray, co-discovering solarisation and immersing herself in the avant-garde. Her surrealist photographs shimmer with wit and invention, transforming pavements, reflections and shadows into unsettling dreamscapes.

Her celebrated 'Portrait of Space' (1937), made in the Siwa Oasis, collapses desert and dream into a single frame. She also captured playful portraits of Charlie Chaplin and Leonora Carrington, securing her place in the artistic circles of the time.

At the exhibition's heart lies her war photography. As one of the few accredited female correspondents, Miller chronicled Blitz-battered London, women's roles on the home front, and the liberation of Europe. Her images of Dachau, and the infamous portrait of herself in Hitler's bathtub, remain some of the 20th century's most unforgettable.

The show ends with her late portraits and a haunting self-portrait, defiantly framing herself as an artist among equals.

There's also a specially curated selection of merchandise – tea towel, tote bag, fridge magnets, badges, posters and sheer floral socks. **Peter Dench**

ALL PICTURES © MARIO SCHNEIDER

New York Short Stories

by Mario Schneider

€48 / US$ 60, Kehrer Verlag, hardcover, 208 pages, ISBN: 9783969001943

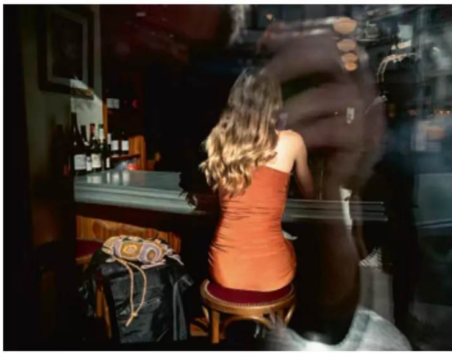
In *New York Short Stories*, German filmmaker, composer and writer Mario Schneider reveals a striking new facet of his creativity. Known for his award-winning documentaries, Schneider combines the eye of a street photographer with his filmmaker's sensitivity to the streets of New York. The result is fleeting, intimate moments that feel both cinematic and profoundly human.

Rather than chase the city's familiar noise and spectacle, Schneider seeks out quiet connections. His images, 19 in colour, 3 in black & white and nearly 100 in rich duotone, linger on gestures, expressions and moods. A sideways glance, a pause in conversation, the texture of late-afternoon light: all of these small details accumulate into a portrait of New York that is contemplative rather than frenetic.

Growing up in the socialist GDR, New York was once an unreachable dream, 'as distant as the Rings of Saturn,' he recalls. When he finally returned with a camera, he worked 'like a visually starving man,' photographing from dawn to dusk until a sense of belonging emerged. That hunger gives the work urgency and tendernessl and his relationship with the city adds an extra layer of poignancy.

Essays by Sergio Purtell, Andreas Reimann and Elin Spring situate Schneider among the great New York street photographers such as Saul Leiter, Helen Levitt and Gordon Parks, yet his humanistic approach favours connection over spectacle.

This book is a meditation on longing, identity and presence. It invites the viewer to pause and look deeply. *New York Short Stories* is a photographic document of urban existence – not just of a place but the fleeting pulse of life. **Peter Dench**



ALL PICTURES © FEDERICO VERONESI

Winona and family, Amboseli, 2022

Walk the Earth

by Federico Veronesi: Photographs of Africa's Last Great Elephants

£45, Prestel, hardcover, 192 pages,, ISBN: 9783791393919

Liwoinde, 2012

Craig, Amboseli, 2021

Federico Veronesi's *Wqalk the Earth* is a lavishly produced homage to the elephant and the fragile wilderness it inhabits. Based in Kenya since 2002, the Italian-born photographer has spent years following these giants across South and East Africa, and the depth of that devotion radiates from every page.

The book gathers 33 colour and 80 black & white images printed on sumptuous paper and bound with the elegance the subject deserves. Veronesi's portraits celebrate both power and vulnerability: tuskers emerge through dust storms, matriarchs lead their herds across parched plains, lone bulls stand silhouetted beneath vast African skies. The locations, including Amboseli, Liwonde, Mana Pools and the Chyulu Hills, provide a dramatic stage of dry lake beds, sweeping savannahs and shimmering horizons. Many photographs occupy double pages. This invites readers to loiter within the scale and stillness of the wild.

Veronesi's own reflections are embedded in the images – quiet, lyrical meditations on patience, awe and the precarious future of his subjects. Elephants, Veronesi suggests are 'the last witnesses of a world before humans took over the earth.' This sentiment lends poignancy to the pages. The elephant's presence suggests eternity. Their threatened status reminds us how quickly that can be lost.

Veronesi's vision and execution encourage the viewer to walk alongside these magnificent creatures. It asks us to imagine a future where their landscapes remain unspoiled. For anyone who values photography, conservation or the quiet majesty of the natural world, *Walk the Earth* is a memorable and essential volume. **Peter Dench**

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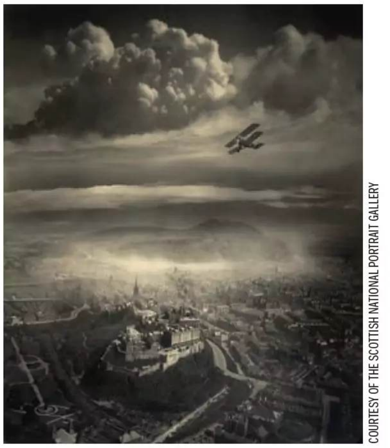
LETTER OF THE WEEK

Alfred Buckham

I've just been to the Alfred Buckham exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh – a wonderful exhibition and refreshingly, not in London.

Alfred Buckham created beautiful montages by hanging out of a biplane and photographing Scotland, Edinburgh, The Thames, South America etc but it was in the darkroom where he created his art, dodging and burning in clouds from his huge archive and adding biplanes to the scene. One of his most impressive non-montage pieces is a shot taken flying through a live volcano in Mexico! He also wrote for AP and one of the displays features a copy where he's described as being 'generous with his advice'.

The exhibition is free and on until 19 April 2026; it's well worth a visit.
Stuart Neville


COURTESY OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Aerial View over Edinburgh c. 1920 by Alfred G. Buckham

Thanks for the recommendation, Stuart. It looks great!

LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG 256GB PRO PLUS MICRO SDXC CARD. NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK RESIDENTS ONLY

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Lost Adobe customer

What's the practical difference between a subscription and a '3-year licence'? Having used Photoshop Elements 7 since 2009, when Microsoft forced me to buy a new Windows 11 PC, I was annoyed that I could not successfully install PE7 on it. Being a long-term satisfied user, I bought the current version of PE, but Adobe had replaced the one-off purchase with a 3-year 'licence' at about £90, which would force an unwanted and expensive 'upgrade' after 3 years. After finding the AP review I purchased Affinity Photo 2, as this was a 'one-off' purchase. However, it is far more complex than I need. So far I have only found one thing (focus stacking) that I could not do more easily with PE7.

If Elements was still a 'one-off' purchase Adobe would have had a sale, but I assume I am now just one of many ex-Adobe users. **Chester Willey**

You may be aware of the recently coined word 'enshittification' which describes the process by which a product or service, especially one connected with technology, gets worse over time as companies seek to wring more profit out of it. Elements is an example of this, and of the growing drive of big corporations to end the concept of ownership and replace it with a lifelong subscription, whether that be to music, the heated seats in your car, or your editing software. This is a disgraceful example of corporate greed by Adobe, in my opinion.

It ain't half good!

Being a fan of Fujifilm, I bought the X Half, despite most online reviews being negative. Certainly when assessed against current camera trends, the X half could be considered over-priced, low-spec and almost toy like.

However, after using the camera for several weeks, I find it really refreshing – those of a certain age will recall the days of taking your film to Boots, waiting a week for the prints then finding that over half of the shots were rubbish (focus didn't properly lock on, etc). But there were always one or two gems, which made you rush out and buy another film, with the aim to improve your success rate. And so it is with the Fuji X Half, most of the shots are an immediate delete. I now have to take more time to frame correctly, and check the exposure, rather than simply pressing the shutter button and relying on the tech doing everything for me.
Darren Marshall

ANDY WESTLAKE

Darren writes in with praise for the Fujifilm X Half

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

How has photography helped you?

You said...

Mark Cann
It's the one thing that's for me and it gets me out in nature. Slows me down and resets for daily challenges.

Linda Wride
Photography was a creative lifeline while I supported my husband through nearly seven years of incurable cancer. Since then, it has supported my own mental well-being by meeting people from all over the world who share my passion, making long-lasting friendships in the process. Thank you, photography.

Stuart Stott
Sounds daft but my camera is like a shield protecting me…

Marie Bruce
I started doing portrait photography featuring my handmade dresses in April. Meeting other creative people, getting out in nature, and styling and directing shoots has done wonders for my mental health and self-esteem.

Cynthia Momoko Harper @HarperMomoko
Photography has given me the time to let myself get into my own world of creative thinking and make my ideas become reality.

Emma Stephenson
I've got autism and ADHD. I'm naturally subconsciously aware of my surroundings which can be exhausting in busy places. Wildlife photography provides me a calming space to be switched on in. Settles my nervous system; and the act of composing the shot, taking the photo and then the editing afterwards also gives me a healthy task to focus on. Added bonus, I'm wildlife mad and always have been and just love interpreting animal behaviour.

Michelle Clarke
Love the peace it gives me. I can tune into something else for a while, it's my escape.

rob lay @ThurrockOrob
Getting out in nature has helped my mental well-being lots, as I have epilepsy as well and memory issues. Focusing on my cameras and settings gives a break about thinking of other things.

Stephanie Graham
For many years I have had a full-time day job while also being a carer to my elderly mother; who has Alzheimer's and increasingly limited mobility. Photography gets me out of my own head. Looking down a long lens finding the small details in my subject or their behaviour helps me to lose myself and forget the day-to-day challenges of life. It's my fuel, my passion, it sustains me. I'm not sure if I'd still be here without photography.

Share your photos and comments with us on social!
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Out of this world!

Royal Museums Greenwich have announced the phenomenal winners of this year's ZWO Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition. **Jessica Miller** takes a look...

Awe-inspiring scenes of the Milky Way, dancing aurorae and serene galaxies all feature in this year's ZWO Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition. With over 5,500 entries received from amateur and professional photographers, submitted from 69 countries, this year's winner is a collaboration between three photographers – Weitang Liang, Qi Yang and Chuhong Yu – with 'The Andromeda Core'.

Dr Ed Bloomer, Royal Observatory Greenwich Astronomer and judge said, 'Once again, ZWO Astronomy Photographer of the Year offers up some of the best astrophotography in the world. This year I believe we're particularly strong on images which ask the observer to really think about what they're looking at and investigate just how the astrophotographer has achieved those particular results – this proved true for the judges as well! I think entrants have embraced the notion of being playful and bold and they continue to strike out in unexpected directions.'

Over 100 winning and shortlisted images are on display now in the Astronomy Photographer of the Year 17 exhibition, at the National Maritime Museum, London, until 3 August 2026. To see more winning images, and find out more information about the competition and exhibition, visit rmg.co.uk/shortlist

The Andromeda Core by Weitang Liang, Qi Yang and Chuhong Yu

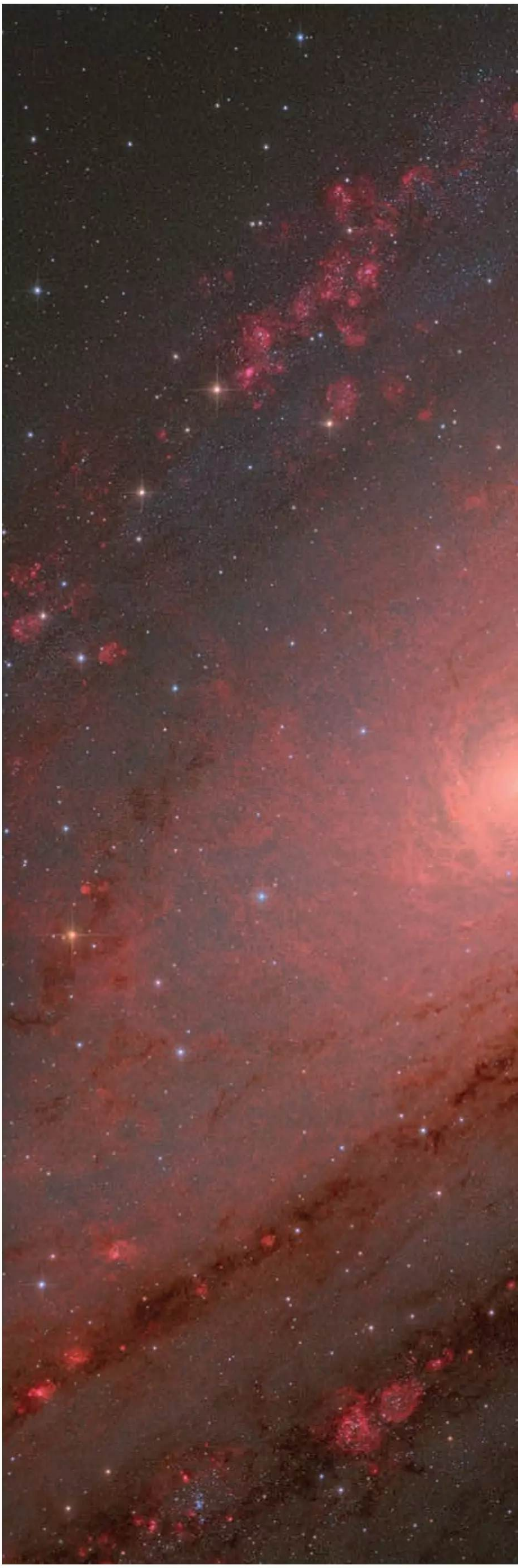
Winner, Galaxies, and ZWO Astronomy Photographer of the Year

PlaneWave Instruments CDK20 telescope, Baader LRGB and Chroma H-alpha filters, PlaneWave Instruments L500 mount, Moravian Instruments C3-61000 Pro camera, 3,450 mm focal length, 500 mm f/6.8, multiple 900-second R, G and B exposures, multiple 1,800-second H-alpha exposures, 38 hours total exposure

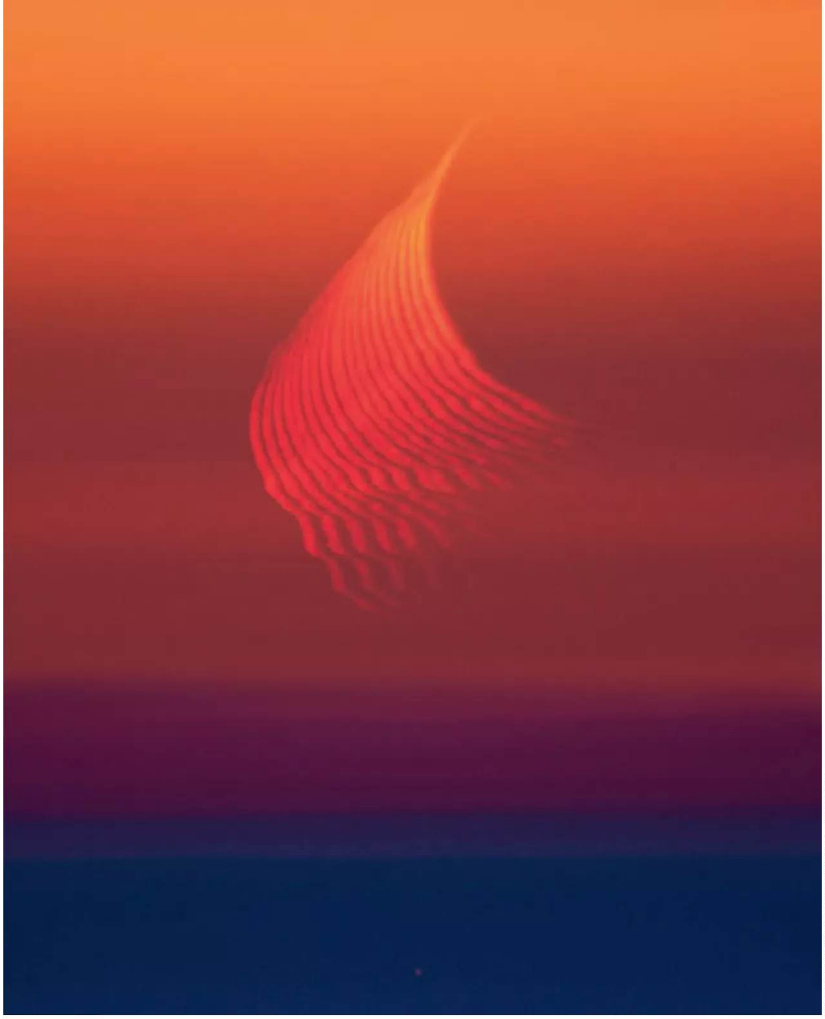
This image showcases the core of the Andromeda Galaxy (M31) in exceptional detail, captured using a long focal-length telescope. Taking advantage of the excellent seeing conditions at AstroCamp Observatory, Nerpio, Spain, the photographers focused on revealing the intricate structure of the galaxy's central region and its surrounding stellar population.

Liang, Yang and Yu said, 'We are excited to be awarded and never expected to be the Overall Winner. Thanks to ZWO Astronomy Photographer of the Year, we have the opportunity to bring our work and the splendour of the universe to everybody.'

László Francsics, judge and astrophotographer, said, 'The Andromeda Galaxy has been photographed in so many different ways and so many times with telescopes that it is hard to imagine a new photo would ever add to what we've already seen. But this does just that, an unusual dynamic composition with unprecedented detail that doesn't obscure the overall scene.'



THE ANDROMEDA CORE © WEITANG LIANG, QI YANG, CHUHONG YU



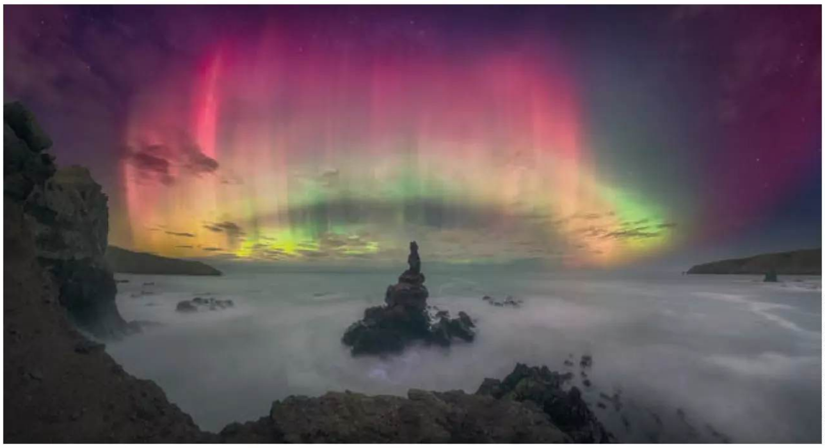
THE TRACE OF REFRACTION © MARCELLA GIULIA PACE

The Trace of Refraction by Marcella Giulia Pace

Winner, Our Moon

Nikon D7100 camera, 600mm f/6.3, ISO 100, 1-second exposure

This image captures the phenomenon of atmospheric refraction, where moonlight passes through dense layers of Earth's atmosphere near the horizon, bending in a manner similar to light rays through a prism. Additionally, the redness of the Moon can be explained by a process known as Rayleigh scattering [smaller particles in the atmosphere scatter shorter wavelengths of light, resulting in longer wavelengths, namely red, being more predominant].



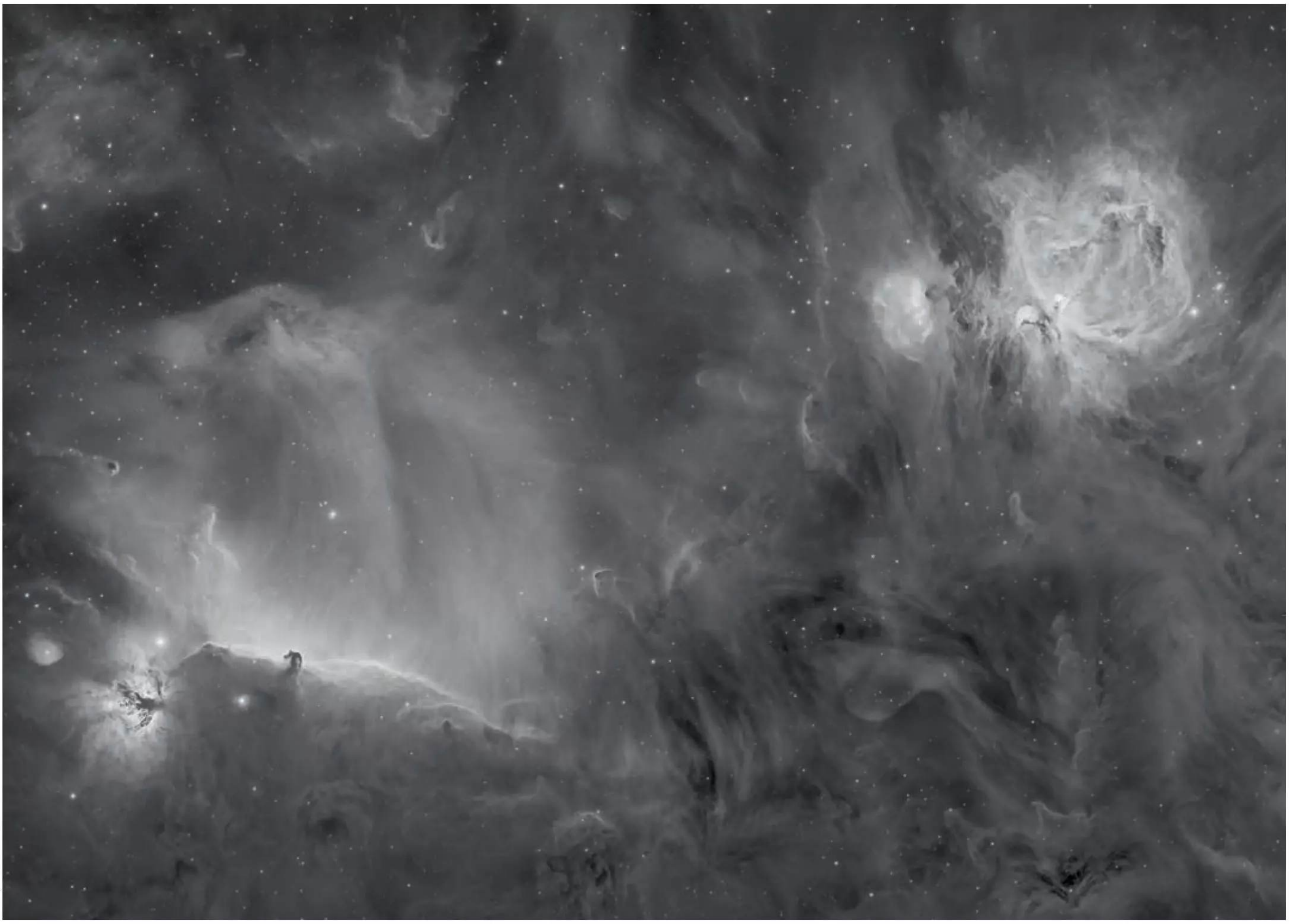
CROWN OF LIGHT © KAVAN CHAY

Crown of Light by Kavan Chay

Winner, Aurorae

Nikon Z7 astro-modified camera, Sky-Watcher Star Adventurer Pro 2i mount, Nikkor Z 14-24 mm f/2.8S, 16mm, Sky: f/2.8, ISO 800, 5-second exposure; Foreground: f/5.6, ISO 3200, 30-second exposure

The image was taken during the G5 storm, the most extreme level of geomagnetic storm, in May. The reds were a level of intensity Kavan had never experienced.



ORION, THE HORSEHEAD AND THE FLAME IN H-ALPHA © DANIELE BORSARI

Orion, the Horsehead and the Flame in H-alpha by Daniele Borsari

Winner, ZWO Young Astronomy Photographer of the Year

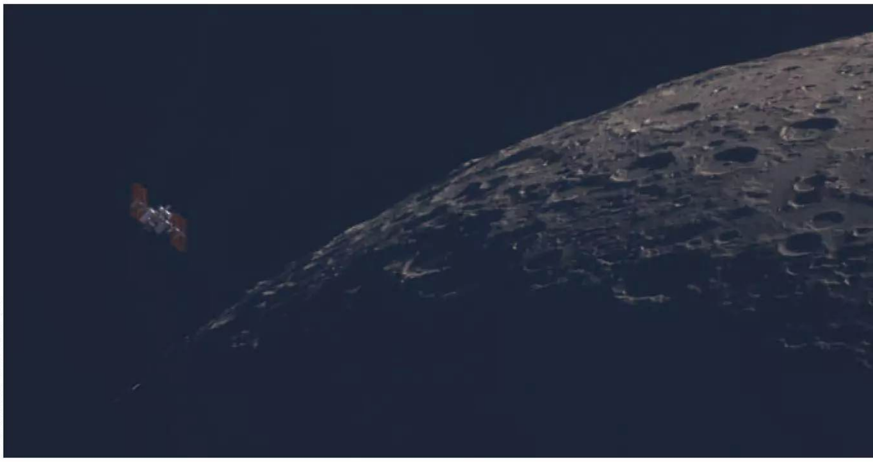
Player One Astronomy Ares-M Pro camera, Sky-Watcher HEQ5 Pro mount, Samyang 135mm f/2.0 lens, 135mm f/2.8, 45 x 60-second exposures and 262 x 300-second exposures, 22 hours and 35 minutes total exposure

This photo was captured with an H-alpha filter to make a monochrome image highlighting the emission nebulae.

On the lower left lies the Horsehead Nebula, also known as Barnard 33. This dense dark cloud of gases hides the light coming from the emission nebula IC 434 and creates the apparent shape of a horse's head. To the left is the Flame Nebula, NGC 2024. The star responsible for the illumination of this nebula, IRS2, is located behind dust and gases and is therefore not visible in the optical spectrum.

And finally, in the upper-right of the image, is M42, famously known as the Orion Nebula. This nebula is a huge cloud of dust and gas where a lot of new stars are born. The energy released by the four central stars (the Trapezium Cluster) shapes the nebula, ionising the gas components.

Greg Brown, judge and Royal Observatory Greenwich astronomer, commented that 'choosing black and white over bright colours and focusing purely on the shapes and contours of the nebulae is a bold decision that has paid off.'



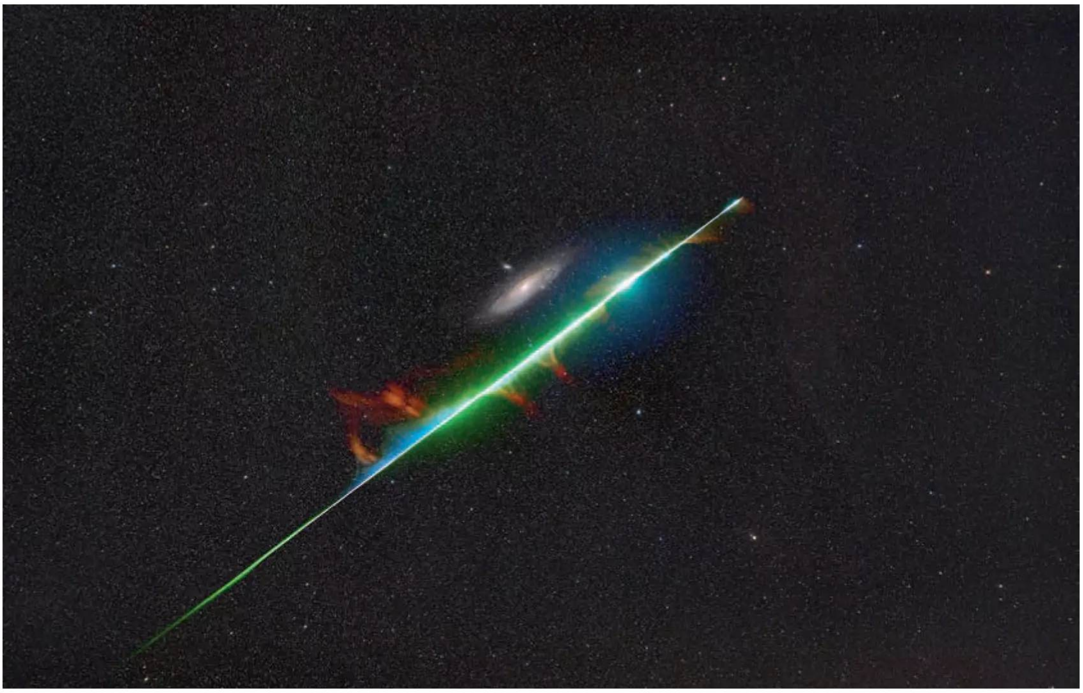
ISS LUNAR FLYBY © TOM WILLIAMS

ISS Lunar Flyby by Tom Williams

Winner, People & Space

Sky-Watcher 400P GoTo Dobsonian telescope, Player Astronomy Uranus-C (IMX585) camera, 300mm f/15.5, 1.5-millisecond exposure

This image shows the International Space Station making a close pass of our Moon. The event was predicted to be a transit but ended up being a close flyby. However, the result is still dramatic, with the station's solar arrays backlit by the rising Sun. Notably, the white radiators can also be seen and are illuminated by earthshine rather than direct sunlight.


ENCOUNTER ACROSS LIGHT YEARS © YURUI GONG, XIZHEN RUAN

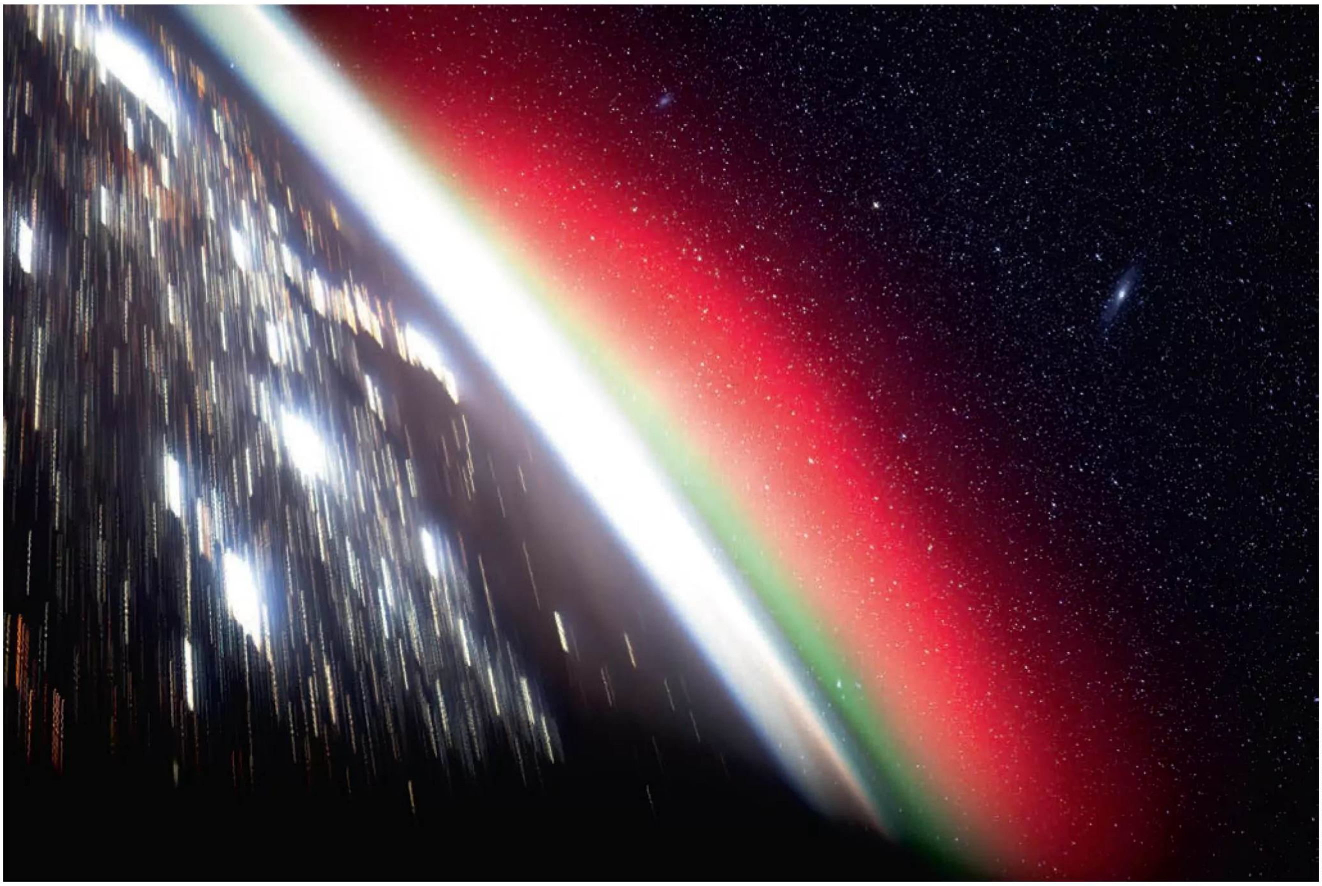
Encounter Across Light Years by Yurui Gong, Xizhen Ruan

Winner, The Sir Patrick Moore Prize for Best Newcomer

Nikon Z30 camera, 56mm f/1.7, ISO 800, multiple 30-second exposures

This photograph captures the serendipitous moment a brilliant fireball from the Perseid meteor shower appears to graze M31, the Andromeda Galaxy.

Originally the photographers had only planned to capture a close-up of the M31 galaxy. Retrieving the camera the next morning, they discovered this wonderful surprise.


EARTH FROM ORBIT © DON PETTIT

Special Feature

An exciting special feature in this year's exhibition will be a photograph taken by NASA astronaut Don Pettit. 'Earth From Orbit' was taken during ISS Expedition 72 and captured between October 2024 and March 2025. This is one of several star field time exposures captured from the International Space Station (ISS) using a homemade sidereal star tracker. Rotating once every 90 minutes, the tracker counteracts the attitude motion of the orbiting ISS, allowing distant stars to be photographed as fixed pinpoints while the Earth continues to rotate below – previously an impossibility in orbital photography. Pettit returned to Earth in mid-April 2025, following a seven-month mission.

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ALL PICTURES © MIHAELA NOROC

Beyond beauty: Women changing the world

With a camera, a backpack and an unshakable belief in the strength of ordinary lives, Mihaela Noroc's latest book reveals the many faces of female power – from mothers and activists to scientists and survivors. **Peter Dench** finds out more

When Romanian photographer Mihaela Noroc published *The Atlas of Beauty* in 2017, she offered the world an antidote to stereotypes: portraits of women in more than 50 countries, each image a quiet statement of dignity and individuality. The book became an international bestseller, earning Noroc a global following.

Eight years later, she has returned with a more urgent sequel. *The Power of Women*, which was published earlier this year, builds on the humanist spirit of her first book but channels it into something bolder, a celebration of women whose influence is reshaping the world. This project took Noroc across the globe and into countless communities and lives.

She says, 'After *Atlas of Beauty* I didn't want to repeat myself. Beauty is wonderful, but I felt the need to show something stronger, to photograph women who are actually changing things – who are not only inspiring but acting. *Women of Power* is about influence, but also about courage and resilience.'

Atlas to Power

Noroc's first project began almost by accident. In her twenties she left a career in media production, travelling the globe on a shoestring with a camera and an instinct to connect. The *Atlas of Beauty* emerged from those encounters: environmental portraits of women in their everyday surroundings, photographed with natural light and an empathetic eye.

The success of that book brought opportunities but also a responsibility. 'I wanted to show women not only as beautiful, but as powerful.' She adds, 'Power for me is not only politics or money. It can be the mother raising children alone, the teacher who inspires a generation, the woman who survives a war and still smiles. These are forms of power we rarely celebrate.'

The *Power of Women* follows a similar visual approach, soft natural light and shallow depth of field harmonises the eclectic characters encountered along the way but the stories are more layered. Many of her subjects are changemakers: 'In Afghanistan I photographed a young journalist who keeps reporting despite constant threats. She told me, "If we stop telling the truth, they win." I will never forget her strength.' Another encounter resonates. 'In Peru a grandmother running a tiny bakery told me, "Power is making bread every morning so my grandchildren can study." That sentence stayed with me more than any speech of a politician.'

Left: At eighty-six years old, Wirginia is an experienced DJ with hundreds of shows under her belt. Minsk Mazowiecki, Poland

Above: The photographer of the project Mihaela Noroc, who says: 'All my encounters have taught me to see success differently than what society often defines'

Years in the making

Noroc worked in the field for the new book over several years, a marathon of travel, research and patient trust-building. She worked largely alone or with minimal support, juggling logistics, cash flow and creative direction. 'There were moments when I wondered if I could finish. Funding was always a challenge and I spent long periods away from family. But every time that I met another incredible woman, I knew I had to keep going.'

Research and planning are vital to a project of this scale. Before each journey, Noroc spends weeks online reading local news, following grassroots organisations and scanning social media to

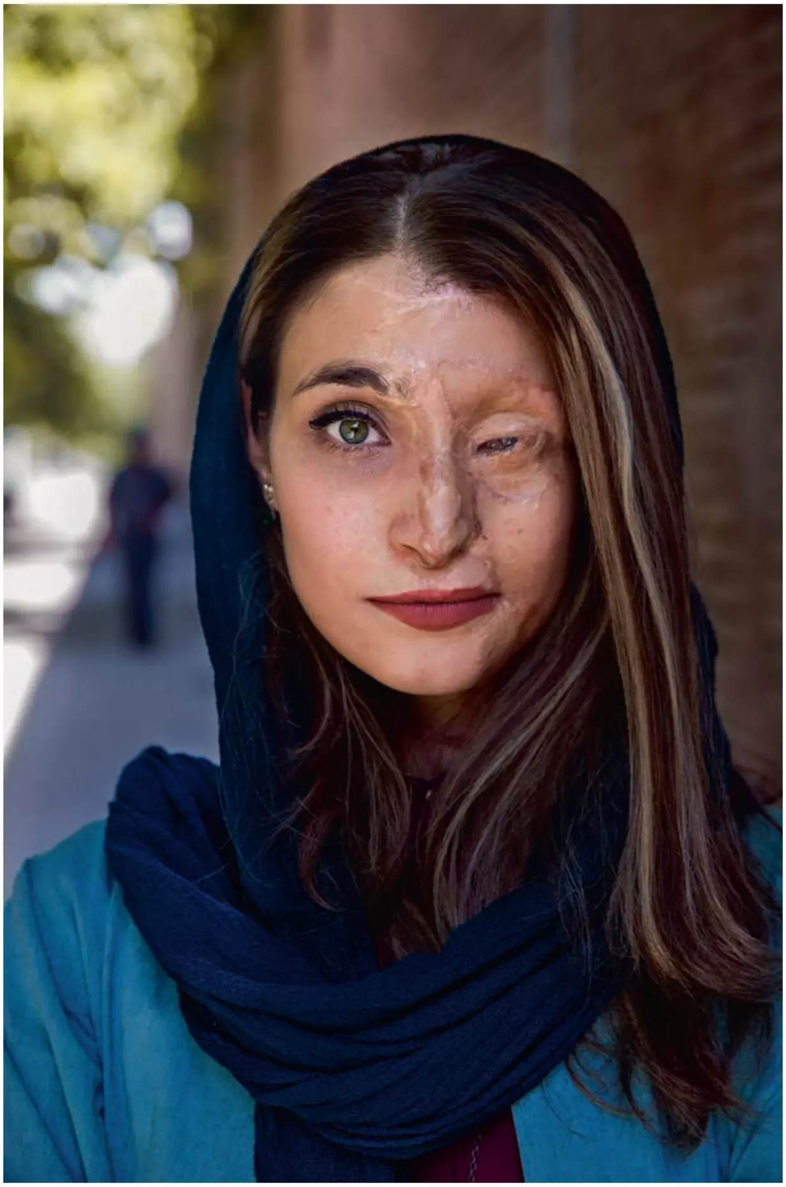
identify women whose stories deserve to be heard. She contacts NGOs, journalists and small community groups in advance to help with introductions, but keeps her itinerary loose enough to allow for chance encounters. Some of her favourite portraits, she says, began with a conversation on a bus or a meeting in a market. Travelling mostly alone, she double-checks contacts and arranges trusted drivers when necessary, balancing careful preparation with the serendipity that keeps her work alive.

Motherhood

'It was so difficult to make this second book. I became a mother, then the pandemic came, it was very complicated. At some point the publisher even said maybe the world doesn't need this book any more. But I knew I had to finish it.'

This moment of doubt was fleeting, and she decided – when practical, to take her daughter with her. 'The greatest challenge was balancing my role as a mother with my role as a traveller. In recent years, I made every effort to work on the project while bringing my daughter with me whenever possible. Being with her every day in the beginning was essential to me, and I knew how much she needed me as well.

'The first time I had to leave her behind felt agonising. It happened during a trip near a war zone. I remember hearing gunfire while photographing women there, but the hardest part was being separated from my daughter for the first time.'



'I didn't deliberately photograph more mothers, but when I met women with difficult jobs, like a mountain guide in Iceland, Aho said, "Now I have to come back to my child." Those conversations stayed with me.'

Simplicity of kit

To focus on these challenges her kit remained refreshingly simple and sometimes forgettable. 'I've used a Canon 5D Mark IV for most of the project. It's not the newest camera but it's reliable and it can handle everything from the Sahara to Siberia.' She continues, 'My favourite lens is the 50mm f/1.4. It's light, discreet and lets me work close, which is important for intimacy. Sometimes I use the 35mm for a

Left: Ragga is a firefighter and explorer. Reykjavík, Iceland

Below left: Marzieh found the strength to overcome her suffering and fight so this would never happen to another woman. Isfahan, Iran

Below: Yasmeen Al Maimani is the first woman in her country to become a commercial airline pilot. Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

wider context, but 50mm feels like the natural eye.'

During our interview she has to leave to check which camera is currently in her bag, a Sony Alpha 5-series body, and jokes about not remembering the exact number. It's paired mainly with a 40mm lens, and occasionally an 85mm.

For most of the journey she favoured portability and natural light over elaborate setups. 'I never travel with lights or reflectors. Natural light is part of the story. It keeps the atmosphere real and makes people feel relaxed. Because I travel alone, my kit has to fit in one small backpack. Camera, two lenses, a few batteries, that's it. Less gear means more conversation. For me the most important equipment is conversation,' she says with a smile. 'The camera is just the final step.'

Stories behind the portraits

Power, in Noroc's lexicon, is not limited to politics or wealth. It's the subtle strength of that grandmother running a small business in rural Peru, the courage of a young journalist reporting under threat, the resilience of women rebuilding after war.

One encounter that stayed with her was Marzieh's from Iran. 'She is an incredible woman who was the victim of an acid attack but found the strength to overcome the pain and fight to prevent such attacks on other women. I clearly remember her crying as she

Above: In a conservative country where sports are seen as a taboo for girls, Khadra is changing the norm. Hargeisa, Somaliland

Left: Julia is a passionate surfer. Barcelona, Spain

Left: Uliana makes a difference in her homeland by assisting other people with disabilities who are grappling with the horrible consequences of war. Kyiv, Ukraine

Below left: Payao has been selling food in this floating market for more than 50 years. Damnoen Saduak, Thailand

Bottom: Evelina is a reindeer herder, continuing the ancient tradition of her family. Glen, Sweden

recounted the day of the attack. Yet, she insisted on sharing her entire story to raise awareness and help to stop such tragedies recurring. At the end, she smiled because she knew her voice could inspire change and give hope to others.'

'All my encounters have taught me to see success differently than what society often defines. What I've learned from the women I've met is that there are countless ways to live a successful and fulfilled life. It's not about the magnitude or fame of your accomplishments, it's about staying true to yourself and following your heart. Whether you're a renowned female climber conquering the highest peaks on Earth or an unknown mother dedicating yourself to your children, both are great achievements.'

What next

Mihaela isn't leaving *The Atlas of Beauty* behind, but her main focus now is a new book celebrating women from her homeland. After topping 100 countries, she is turning her lens inward to document the women of Romania and neighbouring Moldova, where she was born, describing the project as a 'small reunification.'

Approaching familiar territory with the fresh perspective gained from photographing abroad, she plans to travel widely within both countries, taking her time to gather stories over the next few years while continuing to add new portraits to *The Atlas of Beauty*.

Lessons and legacy

Noroc's portraits combine documentary observation with painterly calm. She spends hours talking before ever lifting the camera, searching for the small gestures that reveal character. 'I never want to steal a photograph. It's always a collaboration.'

The result is a book that feels both intimate and universal. At a time when women's rights face new pressures worldwide, *The Power of Women* is both a celebration and call to action. 'These women taught me that power is often invisible. It's in kindness, in persistence, in small victories that change the world quietly.'

The Power of Women is published by Particular Books, Hardcover, 352 pages, RRP: £28. ISBN: 9780241708989

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Revealing Orwell's Jura

PHOTOGRAPHER CRAIG EASTON © CRAIG EASTON

When Craig Easton stepped on the ferry that would take him to the Hebridean island of Jura, it was with the aim of capturing more than just the island where George Orwell spent his final years, finds **Ailsa McWhinnie**

'I call this a work of imagination,' says Craig Easton as we chat over Teams. 'I'm imagining his life there.' The photographer is talking of the novelist, critic, essayist – and gardener – George Orwell, whose time on the Inner Hebridean island of Jura Easton has used as inspiration for his latest book, the crowdfunded *An Extremely Un-get-atable Place*.

Easton is known for his political work such as *Thatcher's Children* – a study of three generations of the same family and the impact of poverty – and *Bank Top* – an area of Blackburn, which was described by BBC's *Panorama* as the most segregated town in Britain. So how did these bodies of work lead him to the concept for a book of large-format landscape images inspired by Orwell? 'Like everybody else, I read Orwell as a teenager,' he explains. 'Given the current global situation, I was reading his work again. And after having done *Thatcher's Children* and *Bank Top*, which were both very political pieces of work, I was very conscious of how much division there is in the world, and Orwell wrote about that.'

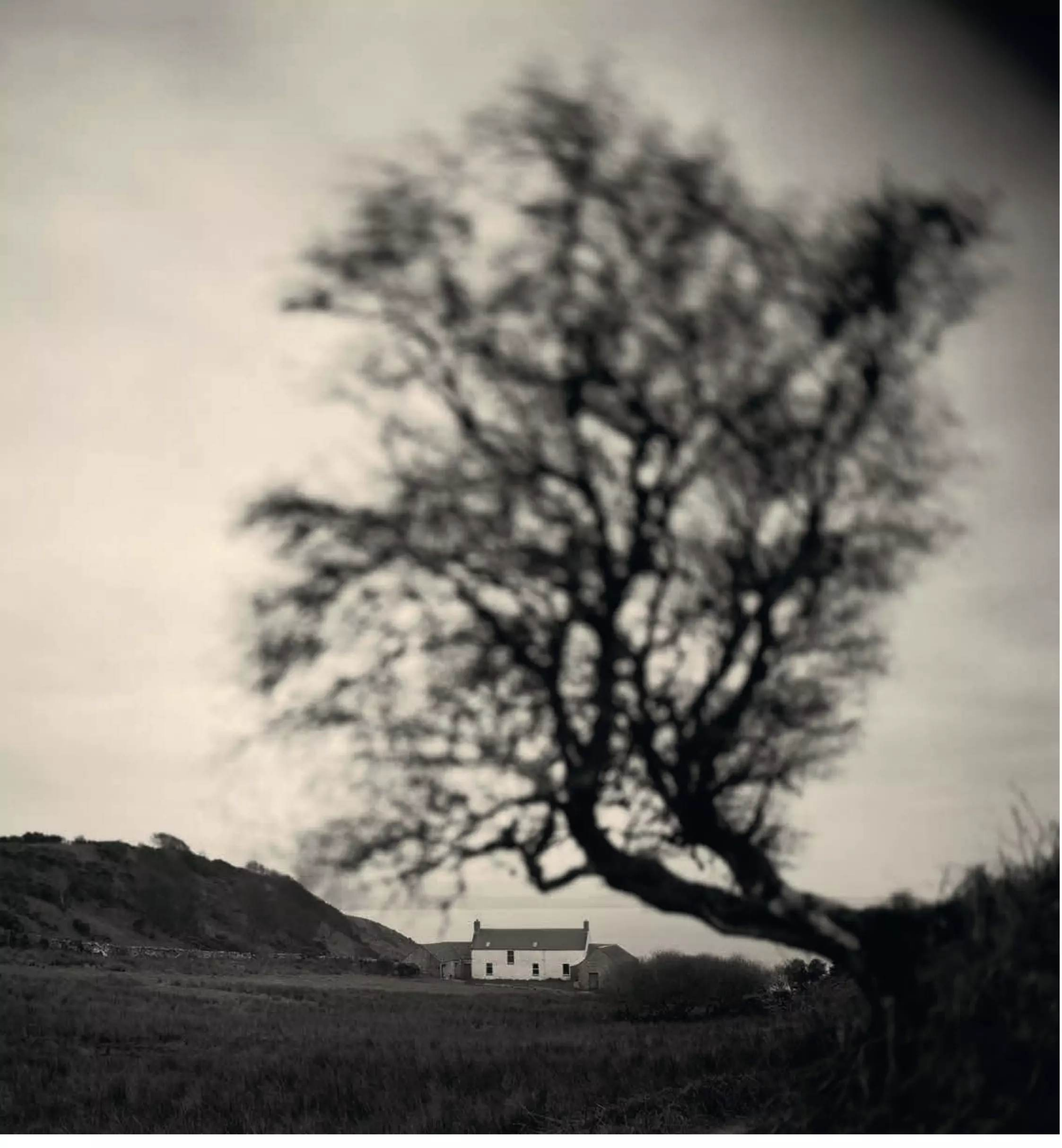
Therefore, while these evocative and lyrical black & white landscape images are a distinct step away from his projects of recent years, there remains a political undercurrent. 'Orwell also looked for hope,' he says, 'and I was asking myself how we can respond in the current situation. We can either get more and more angry, or we can try to find a way through it and try to be the change we want to be. So this was an opportunity for me to slow down and try to go back to my love of photography as opposed to making work that I was angry about all the time.'

The road to Barnhill

Orwell lived on Jura for the last years of his life, from 1946 until January 1949, when he was forced to leave because of the tuberculosis that would eventually be the cause of his death a year later. He was accompanied there by his sister Avril, his housekeeper Susan, and his adopted son Richard. Orwell's wife, Eileen Blair, nee O'Shaughnessy, had died in 1945, less than a year after the couple had adopted Richard. It was on Jura, in a remote house called Barnhill, which can still be found several miles down a private single-track road, that Orwell wrote *1984* (and it was also here that he and Richard would come close to drowning in the notorious Corryvreckan whirlpool).

'The family that rented Barnhill to Orwell [the Fletchers] still owns it today,' says Easton, 'and it's not really been touched since he died.' There's no mains electricity, the small fridge is gas-powered and any heat comes from a coal-fired stove. 'If you went to the top of the hill, you might occasionally get a phone signal, but in any case the electricity was so weak, it would take 48 hours to charge a phone.'

It was a characteristically cold and wet February when Easton travelled to the island. And so it was he found himself absorbing the details of Barnhill – and while the chipped teapot he photographed may not have been the same one in which Orwell brewed his 'Nice Cup of Tea', the stair carpet is frayed from his footsteps and, essentially, the Jura that Orwell saw is the same one that Easton tramped across some 75 years later. 'I wasn't trying to do some



ALL IMAGES © CRAIG EASTON

kind of step-by-step, saying "this is what he did, and this is where he went", but I wanted to just respond, and enjoy looking at, say, the light falling across the sea or the view across the Corryvreckan,' he explains.

Evolution of ideas

Because the work was made on film, Easton didn't always realise at the time of shooting which were his 'breakthrough' images – the ones that constituted a lightbulb moment. 'In hindsight there are two or three that stand out,' he tells me, 'but at the time I wasn't so sure. The picture of the house with the tree is the signature picture of the book, in a sense. I knew at the time that I was playing with it in a certain way, with the tree being out of focus in the corner, and that allowed me the freedom to start playing with focus as opposed to making straight landscapes.'

Towards the end of his time on the island, Easton found himself shooting in a more abstract fashion – through a rain-soaked window or into an ethereal, soft view of mist. 'Suddenly, these sorts of images made sense within the context of the rest of the work,' he explains. 'But if I'd shot those at the beginning, you'd think "God, what the hell's that?" But what I'm really trying to do is evoke the atmosphere or feelings Orwell must have had when he was there, because the reason I went there is the same reason he did – to try to make sense of these times of terrible turmoil.'

Of course, Orwell wouldn't have been reflecting only on the global tumult of the time, but also his inner battles. He knew he was dying of TB, and at one point had to leave for several months to receive treatment. Despite this, however, he planned out gardens, and planted

fruit trees and flowers, vegetables and shrubs. And, shortly before moving to Jura, he wrote his essay Notes on a Common Toad, which is quoted at the beginning of *An Extremely Un-get-atable Place*: '…is it politically reprehensible, while we are all groaning, or at any rate ought to be groaning, under the shackles of the capitalist system, to point out that life is frequently more worth living because of a blackbird's song, a yellow elm tree in October, or some other natural phenomenon which does not cost money?'

Finding optimism

Given the gardens Orwell planned (diagrams of which are reproduced in the book), I put it to Easton that gardeners are often considered to be the ultimate optimists. They sow seeds, not knowing whether they will germinate, and they plant bulbs in autumn, assuming they'll still be around to see the flowers in all their glory the following spring. He agrees, but expands the point further. 'I think that optimism is also true of photographers and sculptors and painters and writers – it's about being compelled to make something. And when you've made something, it makes you feel better or gives you a greater understanding.'

The joy of shooting on film, for Easton, is that the creative process continues into the darkroom, where the real magic can often happen. 'It's a unique experience, isn't it?' he says. 'There just isn't anything like it.'

The first step in the – breathtakingly expensive – process (a 50-sheet box of 20x24in Ilford Multigrade Warmtone now costs the best part of £600) is for Easton to make 10x8in contact prints. Once he's got these just as he wants them, he makes a series of 20x24in prints in editions of five. What stands out about this project,

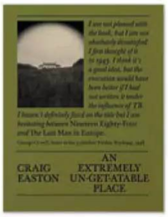
however, is the nod towards Orwell's favourite beverage – because each print is carefully toned in tea. I ask Easton how loyal he was to Orwell in his investigations about which had the most pleasing effect. Is it Indian? 'Ceylonese'? No, as it turns out. 'Oh, I experimented with all sorts,' he says, smiling, 'and I discovered that the cheapest, crappiest, most tanniny tea is the best. No, they're not toned in lapsang souchong – they're toned in very, very, very strong tea. I think there are about 16 teabags in a litre or thereabouts. He would be horrified.'

Fascinatingly, Easton was given permission by the Orwell Foundation to reproduce the first eight pages from the original manuscript of *1984*. With these, we are given the opportunity to see Orwell's crossings-out – entire paragraphs often struck through – and the rewrites in his own handwriting. (Who knew, for example, that the famous first line originally referred to radios striking 13 and not clocks?)

'How much he struggled,' Easton ponders. 'He sat in bed with TB and typed that bloody thing out on his typewriter. Then he crossed it all out and wrote over it and reworked it and re-worked it. And that's what we do [when we create]. When I talk to students, I tell them it's not about being inspired – it's about bloody hard work. I saw that manuscript and in those simple few pages… that's exactly the process of making any kind of art.'

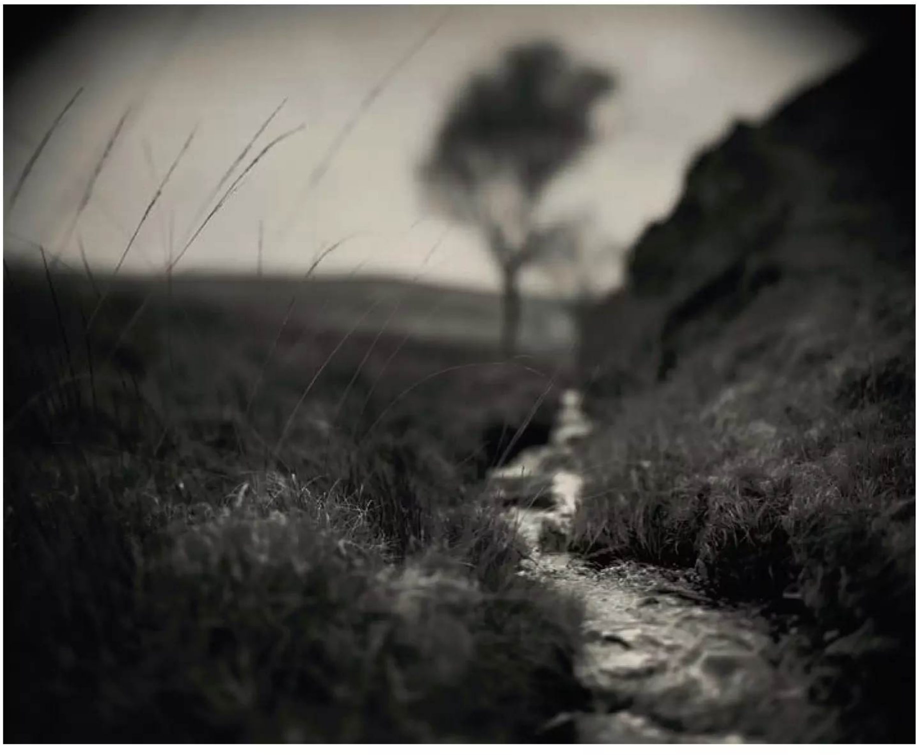
During our interview, Easton is waiting for his doorbell to ring, which will herald the arrival of his first printed copy of the book. How does he reflect on the work and his time on Jura, now that the final piece of the project is about to be in his hands? 'I wanted to try and understand how Orwell managed to marry this political concern for the future with a sense of hope and a sense of belief in renewal. What came out of [my work] was a much greater understanding of his love of nature and how passionate he was. He wasn't just this guy who's really angry at the world and writing these angry books. Actually, he's passionate about family and hope and future and roses and fruit trees and, you know, toads.'

Perhaps the greatest symbol of hope lies in the image that remains uncaptured. More than 75 years after Orwell planted them, his azaleas continue to thrive in the gardens of Barnhill. 'My one regret is that I didn't return to Jura in June or July to photograph them,' Easton says. Orwell never returned – but I have no doubt that one day Easton will. AP



The book

An Extremely Un-get-atable Place (named after Orwell's description of Jura), with text by Richard Blair, is published by GOST Books, 100pp, 58 images, hardback, ISBN 978-1-80598-014-8, £50. Signed copies can be bought from Craig Easton's website at **www.craigeaston.com**



Equipment

Most of the work in *An Extremely Un-getatable Place* was shot on a 1952 Deardorff V10 8x10in field camera, using either a 240mm or a 300mm lens. For days when he walked up to 15 miles, Easton carried a Mamiya 7 with 65mm, 80mm and 150mm lenses.

He has a long-standing relationship with Ilford and uses mostly HP5 and FP4 film. The prints are made on Ilford Multigrade fibre-based paper then toned in strong tea. 'It's been a trial-and-error process to get the tone right,' says Easton, 'and it is frustrating at times when you've made a beautiful print then wreck it in the tea, but it's all part of the joy of getting back to a hand-made process that feels appropriate for the work.'

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Accessorise your photography

Andy Westlake rounds up the best accessories we've used and reviewed this year, along with some old favourites. There's something here for every budget, starting from just £7, including bags, filters, tripods and much more

NiSi Clever Cleaner for square filters

● £7 ● nisioptics.co.uk

If you're a regular user of square filters, you'll know how it easy it is to get them covered in fingerprints from sliding them into the holder and removing them after use. This handy device springs open to reveal a rectangular felt cleaning pad, to help keep their surfaces clean and in perfect condition. Packed up it measures just 8x4x1.5cm, so it will slip easily into your camera bag.

ProGrade
512
think tank

Think Tank Cards + Power

● £17 ● thinktankphoto.com

The last thing you want when you're out shooting is to run out of battery or card space. This handy wallet will hold a pair of spare batteries and has a zipped dual pocket for memory cards, so you can put clean cards on one side and full ones on the other. It can be slid onto a strap or clipped somewhere convenient using the supplied lanyard, and there's a slot for an address card, too.

Lego Retro Camera

● £18 ● lego.com

What should you buy a photographer who already owns everything? Well, how about a camera they've got to build themselves, and then doesn't take photos when they've finished? This 261-piece kit produces a convincing-looking SLR, complete with opening back and 'film strips'. Alternatively, it'll build a camcorder or a retro-style TV. Lego also offers a fabulous Polaroid Onestep SX-70 camera kit, complete with 'prints' that eject when you press the shutter, for £70.

VSGO Tumbler air blower

● £19 ● vsgotech.com

Bulb air blowers are invaluable for keeping your camera's sensor clean of dust, which will otherwise leave unsightly blobs on your images. This 10cm tall version is a particularly fine example. It filters the air that it draws into the bulb and employs a soft silicone tip that won't damage your sensor. A weighted base means it always stands upright, which also helps keep the tip clean.

SanDisk Extreme PRO SDXC UHS-I 128GB

● £21 ● shop.sandisk.com

Every photographer needs a good SD card or two, with SanDisk's Extreme PRO range offering high performance at a sensible price. They promise write speeds of 90MB/s and read speeds up to 200MB/s, at prices ranging from a mere £12 for 32GB, right up to £318 for an extraordinary 2TB. Just be aware that if you regularly shoot high-resolution video or high-speed bursts, you'll probably benefit from the faster, but more expensive UHS-II version.

Mindshift Gear Filter Nest Mini

● £27 ● thinktankphoto.com

As a simple but effective means of organising a small number of filters in your bag, this neat little case is difficult to beat. Measuring 10x9x4cm fully packed, it'll hold four filters up to 82mm in diameter in colour-coded compartments. A plush-lined interior prevents marking or scratches, while a concertina-style design allows it to squash up slimmer when you're not using all the slots. The nylon webbing handle also allows it to be clipped to a bag strap for easier access while you're out taking pictures.

Akara Labs Slim Skin Case

● £28 (no grip), £34 (with grip)
● akaralabs.com

These minimalist, low-profile cases are 3D-printed in the UK. The basic version fits snugly onto the camera body to provide protection against knocks and scuffs. However, we'd recommend getting the gripped option, which adds a shallow but effective fingergrip, plus a small thumb-hook on the back. This makes your camera much more secure to hold one-handed, while adding little extra bulk. They're available for a wide range of Leica cameras, plus the Nikon Zfc and the Fujifilm X-E5 and X100VI.

NiSi Universal Adjustable L-plate

● £30 ● nisioptics.co.uk

L-plates allow your camera to be fixed over the top of a tripod head for maximum stability in both portrait and landscape formats. NiSi's 'universal' design comes in four variations, via two base plates for cameras with different tripod socket positioning, and two different vertical brackets for cameras with or without a vari-angle screen. A list on the firm's website shows which combination works best for any given model. It's a clever idea that works much better than most universal designs.

SmallRig Vibe P108 Pro

● £31 ● smallrig.com

This handy little light provides full-colour output and a nice set of special effects in a compact package. It's powered by an internal Li-ion battery which provides 90 minutes of run-time and charges via USB-C. A shoe mount comes in the box with a clever quick-release design. It delivers decent light output for its size, and is particularly well-suited for adding a touch of extra light to macro subjects. Best of all, it's very affordable too.

Kase Soft Filter Bag 100mm

● £37 ● kasefilters.com

For photographers who regularly use 100mm square filter systems, this might just be the perfect case for carrying all your kit in a single place. The main compartment holds up to ten filters in softly lined pockets, with a concertina-style zip opening giving easy access. Meanwhile, a pocket on the front will hold your filter holder and adapter rings. It comes with a shoulder strap and can also be easily attached to your tripod while shooting.

Think Tank Emergency Rain Cover

● £39-69 ● thinktankphoto.com

There's a lot to be said for having a camera cover that you can pull from your bag to protect your gear from a sudden downpour. This example is designed to fit DSLR or mirrorless cameras and is available in three sizes to accommodate a wide range of lenses. The smallest is ideal for a camera body with a 24-70mm lens attached, while the largest will cover a long telephoto lens. It features a large window to view your camera's screen and controls, while compressing down into a compact carrying pouch for convenience.

Bowman Peak Duo strap

● From £42 ● bowmanleather.co.uk

This deceptively simple slim leather strap stands out due its unique ability to work as both a wrist and shoulder/neck strap. It's nicely made from high-quality materials and comes in a choice of four colours and three lengths, from 70cm to 100cm. A variable length 'Summit' version is also available. It fits cameras with round strap lugs via split rings; there's also a 'QR' option with Peak Design connectors.

NiSi Compact Filter Kits

● £42-85 ● nisioptics.co.uk

Users of compact cameras with built-in lenses have rarely had the option to use filters creatively, so it's great to see NiSi address this with an inexpensive range of specially tailored kits. They're available for Fujifilm X100-series cameras, the Sony RX100 VI or VII, and the Ricoh GR II / GR III. We'd choose the Pro kit, which includes the holder plus polarising, neutral density, graduated ND and natural night filters for £53. For other compact cameras, there's also a holder with a 49mm thread.

Peak Design Everyday Case

● From £43 ● peakdesign.com

For most of us, smartphones have now become our everyday cameras. But their shape means they're easy to drop, so it's well worth investing in a high-quality case. Peak Design's Everyday Cases are available in a range of attractive colours for the most popular flagship devices from Apple, Samsung and Google. They're compatible with some handy photo-centric accessories too, including Peak Design's straps and the magnetic Mobile Tripod.

K&F Concept Medium Sling Bag

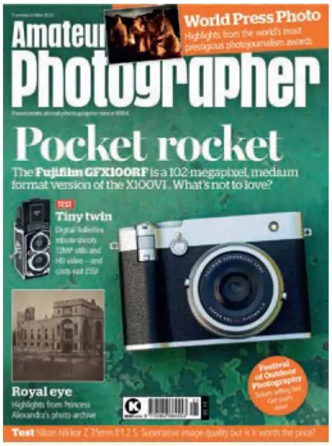
● £44 ● kfconcept.com

If you'd like an affordable shoulder bag for carrying a relatively small amount of kit, this might be just the ticket. It'll hold a camera and 2 or 3 lenses up to 16cm long, with a clever fold-down divider system for different setups. Pockets on the front organise small accessories such as batteries, memory cards and filters, and you can even strap a small tripod underneath. You'll find it on Amazon, and it comes in a wide range of colours.

Ulanzi MA38

● £45 ● ulanzi.com

Smartphones are now extremely useful photographic tools that for many people have replaced compact cameras. They're designed to be used hand-held, but at times it's useful to be able to fit them onto a tripod. This neat device can be used either on its own as a mini table-top tripod, or as an adapter for a larger tripod. Its magnetic fixing works directly with most iPhones, and it can also be used with Android devices via the supplied metal self-adhesive adapter ring.



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3 Legged Thing Binoz binocular mount

● £50 ● 3leggedthing.com

For certain genres of photography – most obviously wildlife and astrophotography – you may well be using binoculars alongside your camera. For extended observing, or with higher magnifications, it can be more comfortable to use them on a tripod. 3 Legged Thing's Binoz stands out from cheap mounts by having a clever quick release for your binoculars. It also fits directly to Arca Swiss tripod clamps and the Peak Design Capture clip.

Peak Design Slide Lite

● £54-£73 ● peakdesign.com

Peak Design's camera straps are among our favourites, thanks to their clever quick-release design and easily adjustable length. This allows them to be switched quickly between multiple carrying styles; either around your neck, over your shoulder, or cross-body. The Slide Lite provides a good compromise between comfort and bulk, making it ideal for most cameras. The Carryology special edition boasts reinforced edges for additional security at a slightly higher price.

Chuzhao camera

● Approx £55 ● amazon.co.uk

Strictly speaking this isn't really an accessory, but then again, it's not a 'proper' camera either. Instead it's a toy digital camera that's dressed up to look like a classic TLR. But the technical image quality simply isn't the point here, instead it's all about the fun of shooting square images and composing them by looking down onto a small square screen. It's sure to turn heads and, like all good toy cameras, it might just inspire you to take some interesting photos, too.

Haida
PL-VND
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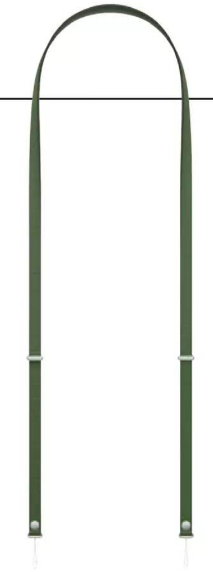
2 in 1 Filter • PROII

Haida PROII CPL + VND 2-in-1 Filter

● £56-132 ● haidaphoto.com

This filter combines the two types that both videographers and photographers arguably find most useful. It's a high-quality polariser combined with a variable neutral density filter that provides a 3-7 stop range. Rotating the red anodised outer ring controls the polarisation, while the density is adjusted using a large metal pin, with markings at 1-stop intervals. It's available in sizes from 67mm to 95mm, with build and optical quality that belies its relatively low price.



Apple Crossbody strap

● £59 ● Apple.com

You may well think I'm mad for recommending an expensive strap that's designed for carrying an iPhone, but hear me out. Because as it happens, Apple may just have accidentally created the best strap ever for compact cameras. It attaches using two small, easy-to-fit connectors, and can be quickly removed when needed. You can adjust the length over a broad range to use it as a neck or cross-body strap, with the two parts held neatly together by concealed magnets. There's even a selection of ten colours to choose from.

WhiteWall Changeable Magnetic frames

● From £60 ● whitewall.com/uk

There's nothing quite like seeing your photos printed out and displayed on your wall. Whitewall's latest Changeable Magnetic frames aim to make it easier to swap your artwork around without any need for tools or struggling with clips. Everything is held together by magnets, so you can just remove the frame and glass to switch-in new prints. They come in a wide range of sizes, and in silver, black or white.

3 Legged Thing PIVOT magic arms

● £62/£70 ● 3leggedthing.com

Magic arms can be attached to many tripods, L-brackets, or camera cages, and be used to hold such things as lights, monitors, or microphones in any required position. 3 Legged Thing's PIVOTs are a fine example, boasting robust magnesium alloy build and smooth adjustments. With standard 1/8in threads at each end, they come in a choice of two lengths, 15cm or 25cm, that boast rated loads of 5kg and 3kg respectively.

Essential Film Holder Kit

● From £65 ● clifforth.co.uk

If you shoot film with the intention of digitising it afterwards, or you have files full of old negatives that you'd like to copy, this simple but effective film holder might be a godsend. It's designed to hold 35mm negatives or 120 roll film above a lightbox for copying using a DSLR or mirrorless camera with a macro lens. It makes light work of copying strips of negatives and is very much faster than using a scanner. It can be bought either as a self-assembly kit for £65, or pre-assembled for £90.

Godox iT30Pro

● £67 ● godox.com

Now that very few cameras have any sort of built-in flashgun, small on-camera units have a distinct appeal. This one from Godox is both portable and affordable, while offering a comprehensive feature set. There's a choice of TTL auto or manual power setting, and the built-in Li-ion battery conveniently charges via USB. It can even work as a 2.4GHz wireless trigger for the firm's larger flash units. An optional riser/bounce adapter adds further to the appeal.

OTEX XT-850 Premium gloves

● £73 inc postage ● otexoutdoors.com.au

Now that we're heading into winter, a pair of proper photography gloves might be on your wishlist. These ones from Australian firm Otex are probably the best we've tested so far. Each glove has flip-back tips on the thumb and two fingers, giving extra dexterity while shooting, which you won't get from normal gloves. They're also warm and waterproof, thanks to a triple-layer design. As the icing on the cake, pockets on the back will hold handwarmers.

Brister's
SpeediGimbal
The Original

Original SpeediGimbal Kit

● £79 ● speedigimbal.co.uk

Quite simply, the Speedigimbal device is a game-changer for photographers who use monopods. It's like a ball-and-socket head, except the two parts are separate from each other. This allows you to use a monopod to support a long lens without having them physically attached. Instead, you can just drop your camera onto the monopod when needed and take it off again just as quickly. Crucially, you get almost unrestricted camera movement.

3 Legged Thing Taylor 2.0

● £80 ● 3leggedthing.com

This sturdy, well-made monopod represents great value for money. With a 5-section magnesium-alloy design, it extends to 158cm yet collapses down to 44.1cm, making it especially well-suited for travel. There's a robust rubber-like grip at the top along with a wrist strap, which together add comfort and security. It's available either on its own or in a kit with the Docx tripod stand, which gives increased stability and smoother panning. A carbon-fibre version is also available, called Alana.

pro
CUBE3
hahnel
1365mAh
56% 80%

Hahnel ProCube 3

● £80 ● hahnel.ie

Now that hardly any cameras come with battery chargers in the box, third-party units are often the best options. We've tested a lot of these over the past year, but it's difficult to look past this USB-C powered update to our old favourite, the ProCube. It'll charge a pair of batteries in a couple of hours and comes with a magnetic snap-on tray for AAs. Versions are available for all major camera brands, with swappable plates for different battery types.

Rode VideoMicro II

● £82 ● www.rode.com

This second-generation version of Rode's much imitated VideoMicro is a completely revised design. It's a small, lightweight unit that picks up sounds primarily from the front, making it ideal for recording someone talking to camera. It's powered directly from the camera and boasts an effective 'Helix' anti-shock mount. Most importantly, it delivers high-quality sound that belies its size, aided by the impressively effective furry windshield. If you want to improve your video soundtrack with the minimum of fuss, it comes highly recommended.

KEKS KMQ light meter

● £90 ● kekscameras.com

If you love shooting with old film cameras, you'll know all-too-well that their light meters can often be unreliable or require long-banned mercury batteries. So there's a lot to be said for having a compact hot-shoe light meter. This fantastic little meter is so small and light there's no excuse for not popping it into your camera bag. It's well made and attractively priced, while giving accurate readings.

ShiftCam SnapGrip Pro

● £90 ● shiftcam.com

There's no denying that the latest smartphones are extremely capable cameras. But simply by the nature of their shape, they're pretty horrible to shoot with. Enter the SnapGrip Pro – a clip-on magnetic handgrip and shutter release button. It fits directly onto magsafe iPhones, but it can also be used with other brands via a stick-on adapter ring. As a bonus, it works as a wireless charger and powerbank for keeping your phone battery topped-up.

Sirui Traveller X

● £109-170 ● store.sirui.com

This remarkable travel tripod manages to combine a useful 1.5m maximum height with an extremely light weight, and without compromising too much on stability. It achieves this using 5-section carbon-fibre legs that employ a 'single twist lock' mechanism, rather than conventional twist or lever locks. It's sold in kits with several different ball heads (I'd recommend the X-1), or a pan-and-tilt option for video.

Fujifilm Instax Mini Link 3

● £115 ● instax.co.uk

We love Fujifilm's Instax instant printers, regardless of their film size. Its latest mini model employs a USB-C charge port and undergoes a subtle makeover but retains all the same charm as before. It connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth, allowing you to print any photo from your camera roll. Print quality is excellent, with accurate-looking colours and a pleasing amount of detail. It's lightweight and portable and offers some fun creative features, too.

Samsung Portable SSD T7 Shield 1TB

● £119 ● www.samsung.com

This small and lightweight SSD weighs just 98g, yet provides plenty of space to back up your precious photo and video files. It's also physically robust, with an aluminium shell that's encased in a ridged, rubberised armour. Thanks to its use of USB-C 3.2 Gen2, image transfer is rapid, with the drive being rated for write speeds up to 1000MB/sec, and read speeds up to 1050MB/sec. It's available in capacities from 1TB to 4TB.

Billingham TEN-16

● £137 ● billingham.co.uk

I'm not going to pretend that this is anything but eye-wateringly expensive for a compact camera pouch. But if you've spent a lot of money on something like a Ricoh GR IV, Leica D-Lux 8 or Fujifilm X100VI, why not invest in the best case you can buy? Padding on the front, sides, and base gives a good level of protection, while Billingham's waterproof canvas will keep out the worst the British weather can do. It comes in a range of attractive colours.

Lexar Professional 128GB 2000x SDXC UHS-II

● £137 ● lexar.com

While many photographers will be happy with standard UHS-I SD cards, the faster UHS-II type media can be invaluable for those who shoot high-speed bursts or record high-resolution video. Lexar's gold-label Professional 2000x SDXC card is up there with the best we've tested, offering rapid 300MB/sec read and 260 MB/sec write speeds. The card is also claimed to be shockproof, vibration proof, protected against X-rays, and to work in temperatures from 0°C to 70°C.

Hollyland Lark M2S combination kit

● £149 ● hollyland.com

This excellent wireless mic kit stands out due to the clever design of the transmitter units. Only the tiny microphone section is visible, with the rest of the electronics hidden away behind the subject's clothing. The kit comes with one transmitter that plugs into the USB-C port of a smartphone or computer, and another that's designed to be used on your camera. Sound quality is really very good, with active noise cancellation that works well to reduce environmental distractions.

Vanguard VEO City S30

● £149 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

A uniquely versatile bag, the VEO City S30's two-part design includes a removable 'tech pouch'. This allows it to switch from being slimline and street-friendly to a more capacious, if bulkier, form. It's packed full of neat and useful features, with plenty of pockets for accessories and tripod carrying straps included. Both sections are semi-rigid in construction, with a decent degree of padding. It comes in grey or navy blue and a larger S36 model is also available.

3 Legged Thing Airhed Vision

● £150 ● 3leggedthing.com

Most serious photographers probably have a tripod with a ball-and-socket head, but a fluid pan-and-tilt head can be a really useful addition to the armoury, too. While they're most obviously designed for video, they work extremely well with long telephoto lenses, too. The Airhed Vision provides super-smooth support for even heavy loads, and has the added bonus of a rotatable camera clamp – although this does require a hex key.

Datacolor Spyder

● £159 ● datacolor.com

Datacolor's monitor calibration device is designed to help photographers and videographers adopt a colour managed workflow, ensuring that their laptop screens and desktop monitors all display images and footage accurately. It connects to computers via USB-C, with a USB-A adapter included in the box, and works with LCD, mini-LED and OLED monitors. It's easy to use and the calibration process is speedy, taking less than 90 seconds to complete.

Vanguard VEO Metro B25L

● £185 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

This good-looking backpack will hold a camera and up to 4 lenses, with separate sections for a 16in laptop and personal items. With generous padding and an internal metal frame, it offers a good level of protection for your valuable kit. It's packed full of useful pockets and clever little design details, including a spectacularly well-hidden Airtag holder and external pockets either side for a water bottle or tripod, etc. Crucially, it's comfortable to carry even when full.

Tenba DNA 16 DSLR backpack

● £199 ● uk.tenba.com

If you need a two-section backpack that lets you carry plenty of personal items alongside your camera, this one may just hit the spot. Uniquely, it unzips and pulls open from the front, which lets you get at your kit from above while the bag is upright. There's space for a camera and 3 or 4 lenses, plus a laptop up to 15in. Pockets on either side will hold a water bottle and tripod.

Kase Revolution Magnetic Circular Filter Kits

● From £200 ● kasefilters.com

In a clever re-imagining of how filters should work, these kits include polarising, 3-stop and 6-stop neutral density filters that snap magnetically onto adapters that screw into your lens. Pro kits add a 10-stop neutral-density filter. The magnetic design considerably speeds up the process of using filters, which encourages you to use them creatively. Kits are available in a wide range of sizes, starting from 49mm and going all the way to 112mm. A guide on the firm's website helps you to select the ideal size kit for your lenses.

Epson Expression Photo XP970

● £209 ● epson.co.uk

This impressive multifunctional printer is capable of producing A3 prints while retaining a compact footprint. Along with a conventional USB connection, it can work over Wi-Fi from a laptop, smartphone, or tablet, or print directly from an SD card or USB stick, controlled using the excellent 10.9cm colour LCD touchscreen. Other handy features include a 4800 DPI A4 scanner and double-sided document printing. Keen photographers in need of a compact but high-quality all-in-one printer need look no further.

Vanguard Alta Pro 3VLT 235AV12

● £220 ● vanguardworld.co.uk

While there's any number of travel tripods available, it's rare to find one that's fully optimised for video. Vanguard's Alta Pro 3VLT models are distinguished by combining a fluid pan-and-tilt head and a levelling bowl with a slimline, lightweight leg-set. This 235AV12 version employs 5-section aluminium legs to give a maximum height of 1.48m, while weighing just 1,235g. It's rated to support 5kg, but the PV-12 head gives smoothest movements with kit weighing up to about 1kg.

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Lexar 512GB Professional Type B CFexpress card

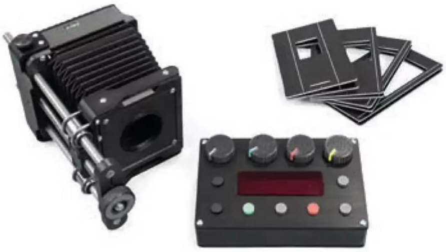
● £229 ● lexar.com

Many of the latest cameras now use CFexpress cards, whose much faster write speeds compared to SD cards allow for longer burst shooting and higher quality video recording. Most manufacturers use the larger Type B cards, with the notable exception of Sony. We've found this card to work reliably across cameras of all brands, supporting sustained high-speed shooting with ease. It comes in sizes from 512GB to 2TB.

Wandrd Prvke 21 V4

● £281 ● wandrd.com

Wandrd's latest take on its popular compact backpack introduces smart upgrades and sleek style for everyday use. Durable and comfortable to carry, it provides access from the top, side and back. The modular design allows different sized camera cubes to be used for smaller or larger kits, or the backpack can be used on its own. Dedicated sleeves hold a tablet and laptop, and there's a pocket on one side for a water bottle or tripod. It comes in a choice of 8 colours.



Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £300 ● intrepidcamera.co.uk

Enlargers for making prints at home always used to be large, heavy and expensive, but UK-based Intrepid has changed that with this revolutionary design. By utilising sophisticated colour LED technology, it's produced a stunningly small yet fully featured enlarger that can be mounted on a copy stand or tripod. Everything is operated from a single control box, with filters for colour balance and contrast built in. It'll work with negatives from 35mm to 6x9cm; you'll just need a suitable lens.

Billingham Hadley Pro 2020

● £326 ● billingham.co.uk

This top-end model in Billingham's iconic Hadley line will accommodate a full-frame mirrorless camera and 3 or 4 lenses. It includes a detachable shoulder strap and a strap on the back that allows it to be slipped over the handle of a suitcase. It's impeccably constructed from premium materials, including Billingham's signature waterproof triple-layer canvas. A variety of attractive colour combinations is available, including black, khaki, navy, and sage. It may be pricey, but it will last for decades.

Kase Wolverine K9 Entry-Level Kit 100mm

● £399 ● kasefilters.com

This excellent setup is based around a slimline filter holder that boasts extensive light-sealing for use with neutral density filters. The 82mm polariser clips into place magnetically, which makes it unusually quick to fit or remove, while also being easy to adjust from behind the camera. Also included are 3-stop soft grad and 6-stop ND filters, with the latter being rectangular rather than square, which makes it easier to insert or remove. Everything fits together neatly into a single carry case.

Calibrite ColorChecker Studio

● £499 ● calibrite.com

This kit enables photographers to adopt a completely colour-managed workflow, from capture through display to print. It allows you to profile the colour characteristics of cameras and scanners when recording images, of monitors and projectors when displaying them, and of printers when outputting your finished work. It works with both Mac and Windows computers, and crucially gives really good results. It's a great tool for any photographer looking to take complete control over their colour management.

DJI Mavic 4 Pro

● From £1780 ● dji.com

Drones are now increasingly mainstream photographic tools, and if you want the best option for photographers, this top-end model from Chinese giant DJI is the answer. It boasts no fewer than three cameras, with the main unit employing a 100MP Four Thirds sensor with a 28mm equivalent lens. It's joined by twin telephotos offering 70mm and 168mm equivalent views. Image quality is impressive and there are plenty of advanced video features, too. You get up to 51 minutes of flying time from a full battery.

Benro GD36PT

● £330 ● benroeu.com

Photographers using a tripod have previously had to choose between the convenience of a ball head or the precise composition afforded by a geared head. But this hybrid design from Benro provides both at the same time. On top of an inverted ball head, it provides geared adjustments for +/- 8° pitch and +/-15° tilt, topped off by a smoothly panning Arca-Swiss camera clamp. It's nicely made, works smoothly, and the metallic blue finish looks smart too.

Heipi W28S 3-in-1 Travel Tripod

● £330 ● heipivision.com

Recently we've seen lots of travel tripods with a similar kind of compact, space-saving design. Heipi has taken this concept and added its own unique twist, with a detachable 'three pillar' centre column that can be used as a standalone table-top tripod. The ball head is impressively large and strong, too. The W28S boasts lots of other neat features, while being well made and unusually stable. It's probably the best example of this kind of travel tripod.

Gitzo GT1555T

● £459 ● gitzo.com

This superb travel tripod features 5-section, dual-angle carbon fibre legs that reverse fold around the head, providing a compact folded length of 35.5cm while extending to 148.5cm. The twist locks include O-ring seals to stop sand or grit from getting in, and the rubber feet can be swapped for optional spikes. A short centre column is included for low-angle work, and a useful carry-strap included in the kit. It's superbly made and easily capable of supporting a full-frame camera and large zoom lens.

Peak Design Pro Tripod

● £799 ● peakdesign.com

I suspect that for many people, this will look like an insane amount of money to spend on a tripod, no matter how well designed it may be. But the reality is that for serious photographers shooting with high-end kit, this is the best tripod we've tested for a very long time. It's quick to set up, extremely stable, and will hold heavy cameras and lenses without breaking a sweat. There's a really clever 'Tilt Mod' head adapter for shooting video, too.

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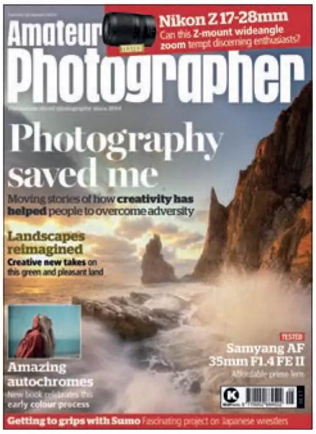

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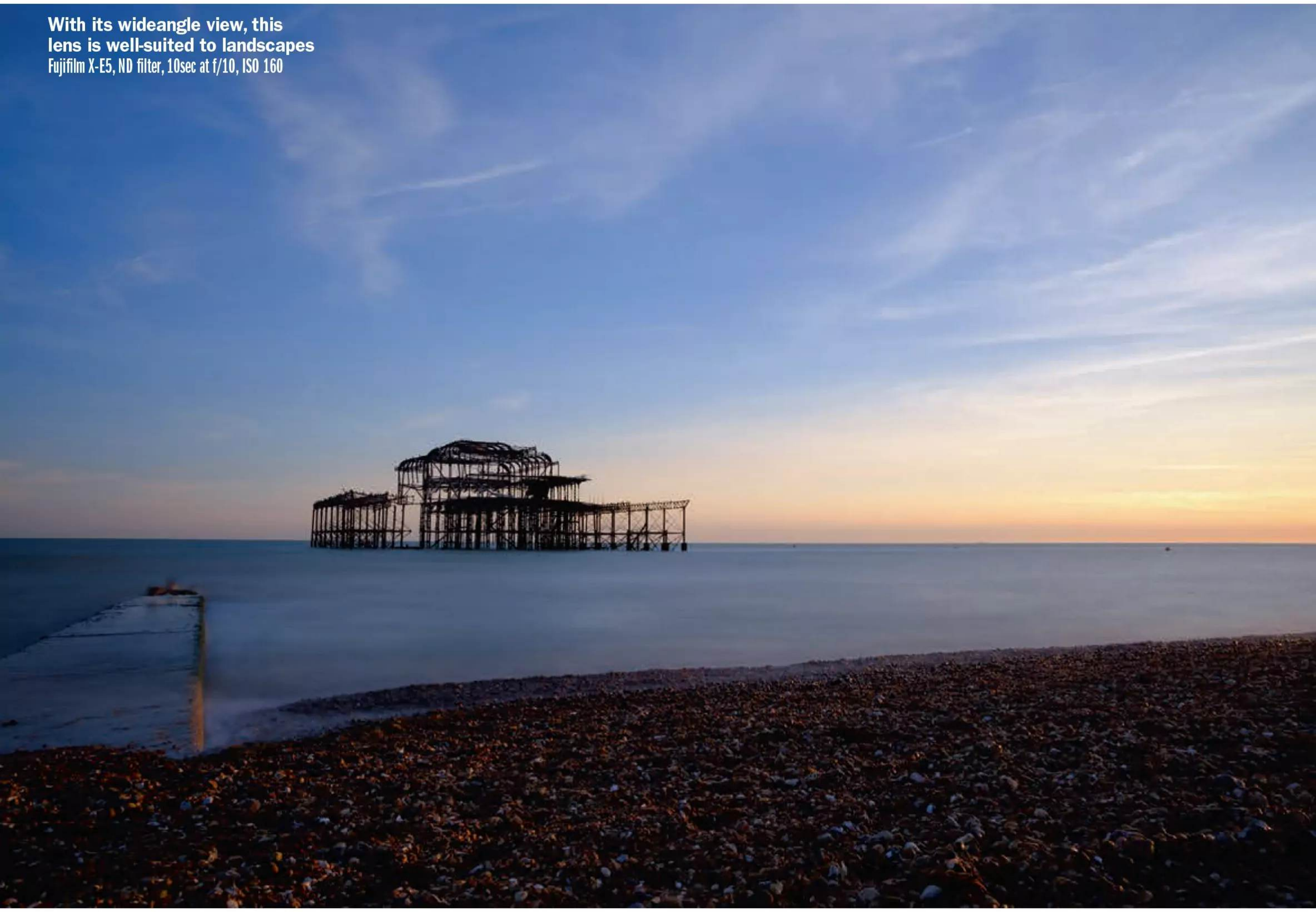


With its wideangle view, this lens is well-suited to landscapes
Fujifilm X-E5, ND filter, 10sec at f/10, ISO 160

Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air

AF 15mm 1:1.7 STM ASPH ED IF
ø58mm 0.23m/0.75ft
APS-C Frame

Compact and lightweight yet affordably priced, this looks like an attractive lens for APS-C format cameras. **Angela Nicholson** takes a look

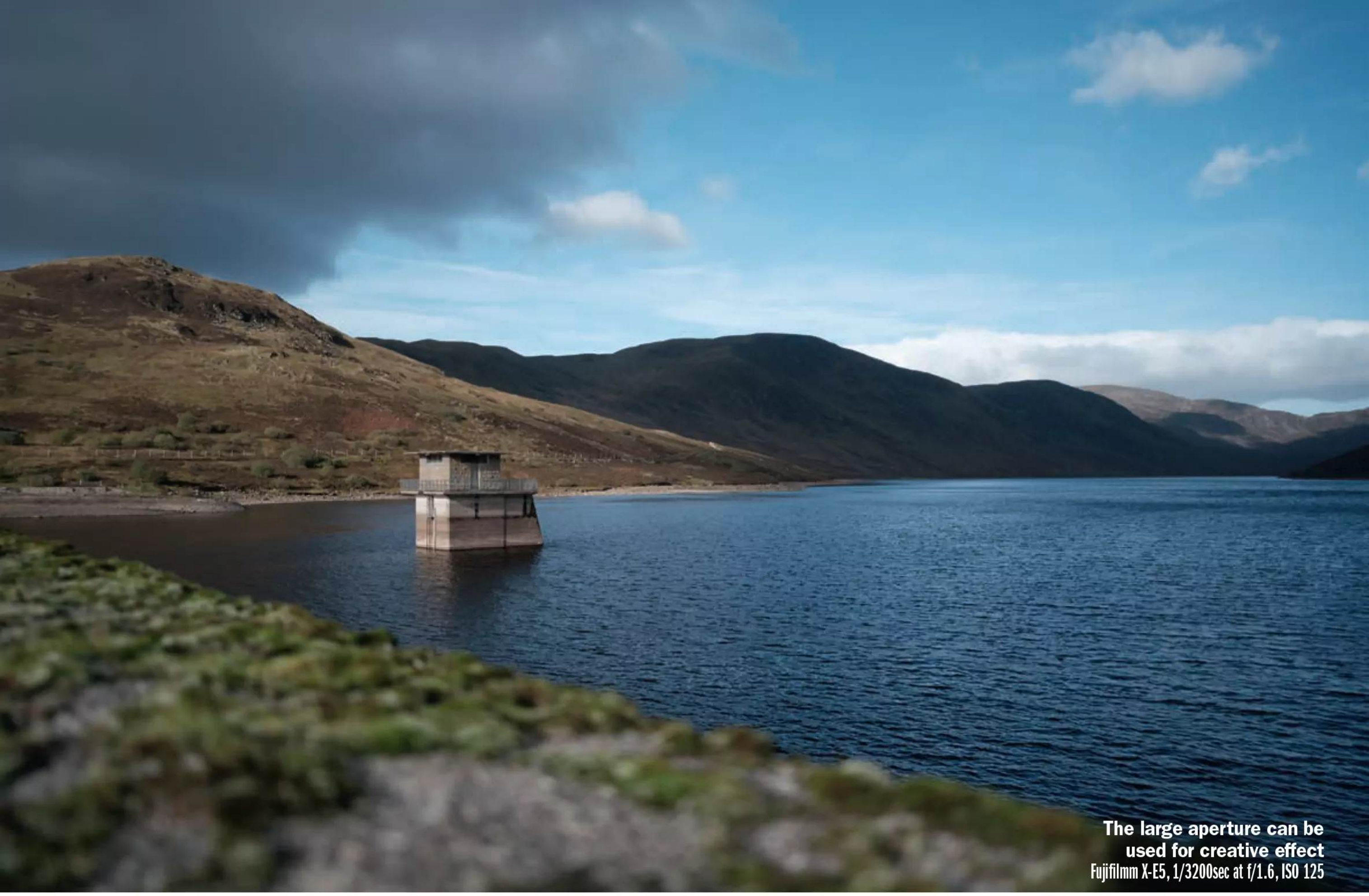
Designed specifically for APS-C format mirrorless cameras, the Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air is a compact wideangle prime lens that delivers an equivalent focal length of 22.5mm in full-frame terms. It's available in Fujifilm X, Nikon Z and Sony E mounts, but not Canon RF-S – perhaps that will come in due course? I tested the Fujifilm version of the lens on the X-E5.

Its 84.9° angle of view makes this lens an appealing choice for a variety of genres including street, travel, landscape, architecture and interior photography. The bright f/1.7 maximum aperture is particularly helpful in low-light situations and offers creative flexibility for isolating close subjects against a blurred background.

Like the other lenses in the Viltrox Air line, the AF 15mm F1.7 Air is small and light, making it a great choice for photographers looking to carry less weight. It's also light on the wallet because the Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air is very attractively priced at £229.

Features

Internally, the lens features 12 elements arranged in 10 groups, including 3 Extra-low Dispersion (ED) elements to reduce chromatic aberration, 3 High Refractive Index (HRI) elements to maintain edge-to-edge sharpness and 2 aspherical elements to correct distortion and boost clarity.

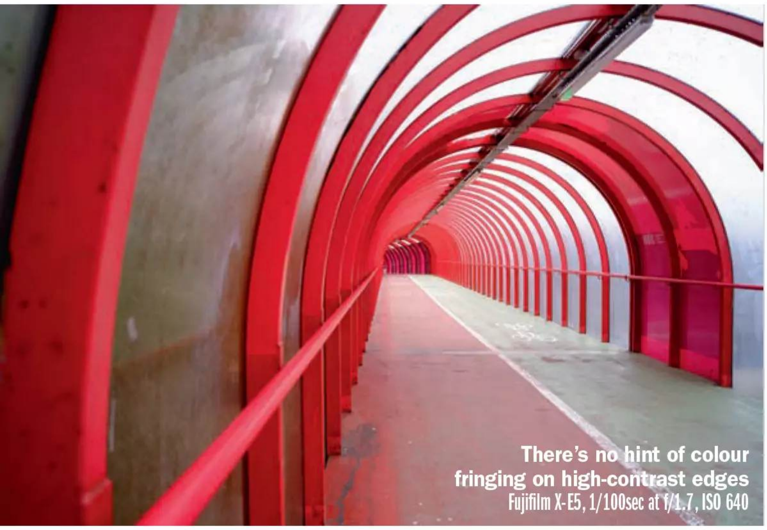


The large aperture can be used for creative effect
Fujifilmm X-E5, 1/3200sec at f/1.6, ISO 125

Special coatings further reduce flare and ghosting, helping to maintain contrast in backlit scenes and other tricky lighting situations.

Focusing is handled by a stepping motor (STM), which supports eye and face detection on compatible cameras. As the lens uses an internal focusing mechanism, the front element doesn't rotate, which is useful if you're using graduated ND or polarising filters. The nine-blade diaphragm is designed to deliver smooth bokeh, and with a minimum focusing distance of just 23cm, the lens allows for creative wideangle close-ups.

Weighing just 180g, the Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air is exceptionally lightweight, and while it's not weather-sealed, the front element has a splash-resistant and anti-fouling coating for added protection. It accepts standard 58mm screw-in filters.



There's no hint of colour fringing on high-contrast edges
Fujifilm X-E5, 1/100sec at f/1.7, ISO 640

In the event of a firmware update, this can be installed by connecting the camera to a computer via the USB-C port in the metal mount. Viltrox hasn't issued an update for the AF 15mm F1.7 Air yet so I haven't been able to test the updating process.

Naturally, given the price of the lens, there are a few compromises. As well as not being weather-proof, for instance, the AF 15mm F1.7 Air doesn't have an aperture ring, which is likely more of an issue for Fujifilm and Sony users than Nikon photographers. In addition, there's also no AF/MF switch on the lens, so these settings have to be selected via the camera's controls.

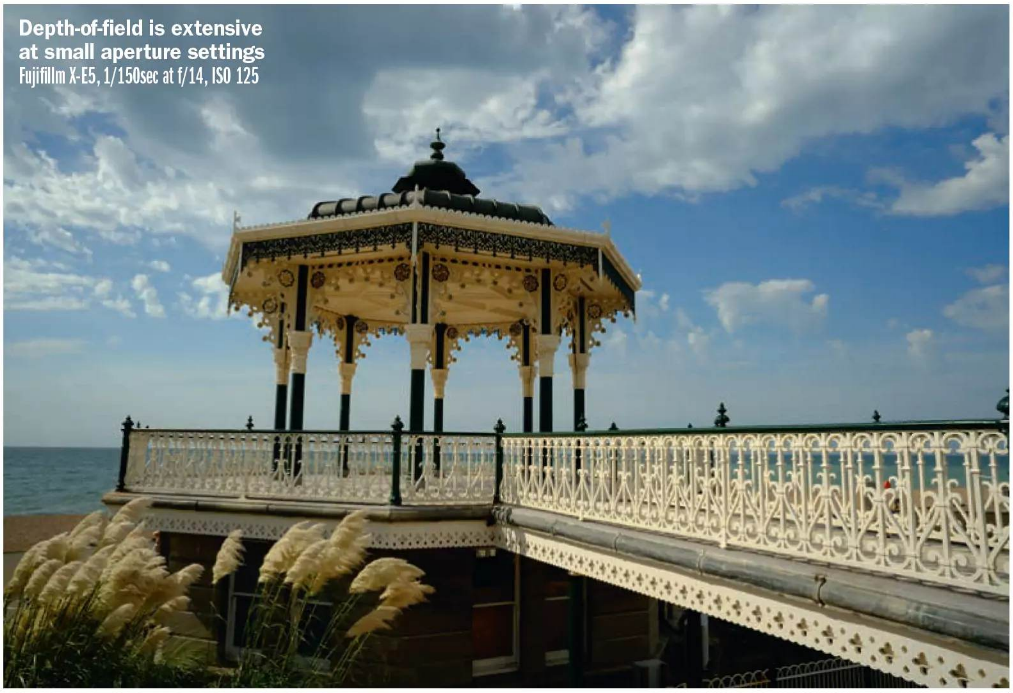
Build and handling

True to the design ethos of Viltrox's Air series, the 15mm F1.7 strikes an attractive balance between size, weight and build quality. With a length of just 56.7mm and a diameter of 65mm, it barely adds any bulk to a small mirrorless body. At 180g, it's one of the lighter autofocus wideangle lenses available for Fujifilm X-mount, and it feels very comfortable when carried for long periods or mounted on a gimbal.

Despite its lightweight plastic construction, the lens feels reasonably solid, perhaps better than the price might suggest. And while the lens isn't weather-sealed, my sample was exposed to quite a bit of rain during my testing and lived to tell the tale.

As I mentioned earlier, there's no dedicated AF/MF switch, nor any customisable controls on the barrel, but it means that the lens is uncluttered and straightforward. The only ring is for focusing and, like most modern lenses, this operates electronically. It moves smoothly and easily, making focus easy to achieve manually with the aid of focus assist tools such as magnification and focus peaking.

The included lens hood has a low-profile petal design that attaches securely and provides basic protection against flare and knocks. Overall, the handling experience is very good, especially when paired with a compact body like the X-E5 which has a convenient focus mode switch. The lens never feels front-heavy and encourages



Depth-of-field is extensive at small aperture settings
Fujifillm X-E5, 1/150sec at f/14, ISO 125

spontaneous shooting, whether hand-held or on a gimbal.

One oddity I encountered during testing involved the camera intermittently switching to Program mode when I wanted to use aperture priority mode and had the shutter speed dial set to 'A' rather than 'P'. Pressing the command dial or changing to manual mode by setting a specific shutter speed briefly usually corrected the issue, and it didn't occur frequently enough to disrupt shooting. But it is worth noting as something to look out for when you're shooting.

Autofocus

Autofocusing with the Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air is generally quick, quiet and accurate. As I said, I tested the lens on the Fujifilm X-E5, which offers good subject-detection and tracking capabilities, and the lens kept pace in most shooting situations. It had no trouble maintaining focus on moving people in daylight and reacted promptly to changes in subject distance or composition.

The STM motor operates silently, which is useful when shooting in quiet environments or recording video. Even during continuous autofocus for video work, the motor remained barely audible and focus transitions were smooth and precise. There's minimal focus breathing, so when the focus point is adjusted during filming, the framing remains consistent – an important characteristic for anyone shooting professional-looking video content.

Also, thanks to that large maximum aperture, the autofocusing is dependable in low-light situations where other lenses might struggle to lock on. Subject detection features like eye AF continued to perform well, adding to the lens's versatility.

Image quality

One of the most impressive aspects of the Viltrox AF 15mm F1.7 Air is the quality of the images it produces. Sharpness is excellent across the frame, even when shooting wide open at f/1.7. This is particularly noteworthy, as some fast wideangle lenses show significant softening at the corners until stopped down. In this case, centre and edge performance are already strong at maximum aperture and become very good by f/4.

Corner shading is visible at f/1.7 and f/2, but it's minor and unlikely to be problematic in real-world images. By f/4, vignetting is negligible. Chromatic aberration is also impressively well-controlled. I noticed no fringing along high-contrast edges during my testing, and even on close inspection at 100%, my images are clean and colour-accurate.

Distortion is also minimal, which is surprising for a lens with such a wide field of view. Straight lines at the edge of the image remain almost completely straight, making the lens suitable for interior and architectural photography.

The lens also appears to have good flare resistance, with the coatings and lens hood doing a fine job of suppressing ghosting when shooting into bright light sources.

The bokeh, while not always a primary concern for a 15mm lens, is pleasantly rendered. Out-of-focus areas are smooth, and small highlights appear rounded at the centre of the frame. Towards the edges, these highlights do shift slightly towards a lemon shape, and some show a hint of soap-bubble structure. However, these characteristics add a bit of personality to the rendering and aren't especially distracting. The lens handles transitions from sharp to soft nicely, producing images with natural depth.

Verdict

WITH the AF 15mm F1.7 Air, Viltrox has created a compact, high-performing lens that belies its affordable price. It's particularly well suited to street, landscape and travel photography where discretion, portability and wideangle coverage are useful. Its combination of compact dimensions and strong optical performance makes it a lens you're likely to leave on your camera for extended periods.

The f/1.7 maximum aperture is a real asset for low-light shooting, and it also gives the lens more creative potential when it comes to subject separation and background blur. While the bokeh may not rival that of a longer focal length, it's surprisingly attractive for a lens of this type. More importantly, sharpness is excellent from corner to corner, even wide open, and chromatic aberration, flare and distortion are very well managed.

Unsurprisingly, given the lens's price, there are a few limitations, such as the lack of weather-sealing, an aperture ring and an AF/MF switch. But these are forgivable, especially considering the optical performance. Overall, the lens is a strong choice for APS-C camera users looking for a small, sharp wideangle prime without stretching their budget. Canon users will be looking with envy and hoping an RF-S version becomes available soon.

Data file

Price: £229
Filter diameter: 58mm
Lens elements: 12
Groups: 10
Diaphragm Blades: 9
Aperture: f/1.7-f/16
Min focus: 23cm
Length: 56.7mm
Diameter: 65mm
Weight: 180g
Lens mounts: Fujifilm X, Nikon Z, Sony E
Included Accessories: Caps, lens hood

Amateur Photographer
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★½

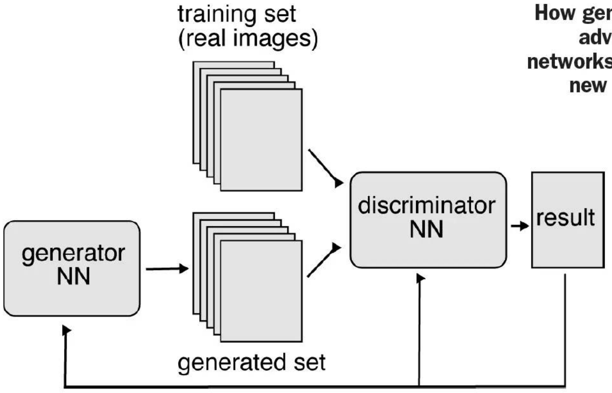
Professor Newman on...

Intelligent

Professor Newman provides an overview of how AI works in cameras and imaging software

There's recently been a lot of talk concerning artificial intelligence (AI) in photography. This article will give a simple account of how these techniques work. In general, they make use of neural networks which mimic the function of the neurones in the brain. The logic gates used by computers were originally inspired by neurones, but are much simpler. The inputs and outputs of neurones can be both electrical and chemical, rather than simple voltage levels, and the function of a neuron is adaptive. This means that a neural network (NN) with fixed connectivity may take on new behaviours, allowing it to learn.

Neural networks allow the solving of loosely defined problems. Normal computer programs define stepwise operations which will lead to a solution of a problem, but this requires the programmer to know exactly what is the problem to be solved. For example, to recognise the image of a face this way means defining the features of a face and their arrangement, and then breaking those down into primitives that can be defined programmatically. In contrast, by using an NN, the same thing can be achieved using a training process. The network is presented with a set of images, some of which are faces and others which aren't. The goal is to provide an output only for those images which are faces. Training consists of multiple runs, with the relative success of each being fed back to adapt the network to achieve a better result, until a satisfactory result is achieved. Thereafter, the trained network can recognise faces which were not in the original training set. It is this kind of function that is used in the latest autofocus systems with subject recognition.



How generative adversarial networks create new images

Generative AI

Pattern recognition is what NNs do best, so how do they 'create' new scenes or parts of them? The answer to this is 'generative AI', which is exactly what it sounds like: AI, or NNs, which can produce something new. This works by a process called 'diffusion', which is analogous to the physical process by which one fluid mixes with another. At the border between the fluids, the thermal motion of the molecules creates a mixture. This then mixes with the pure fluid each side, until eventually the whole liquid is evenly mixed. If we model diffusion computationally, we would have a number of steps leading from the separated fluids to the mixed ones. We could also follow these steps in reverse (computationally, though not in reality) which would lead from the mixture to the separated state. If we used an NN to perform the steps, we could train it to reach the separated state starting from the mixture. Generalising this, we could train the network with the image that we want to produce, and it can be taught how to produce this image from a simple starting point (often noise).

To make the NN generate a type of image, rather than a specific one, is done using generative adversarial networks (GANs), shown in the illustration. A generator network creates images. A second 'discriminator' network is given these images as well as real ones, and tries to identify which are which. The result (which network 'won') is fed back to train both networks.

The final part of the vocabulary is 'large language models' (LLMs). These are networks trained with enormous training sets, such as are available to the large tech companies. These huge training sets allow them to be trained to satisfy very complex requirements with a high probability of success.

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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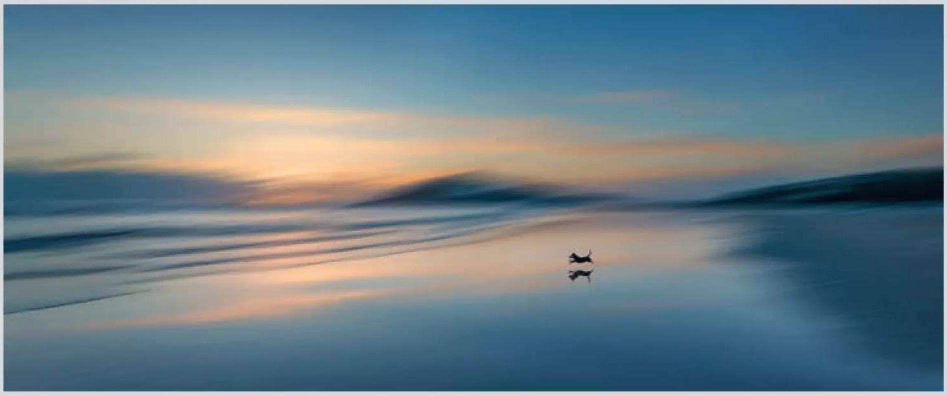

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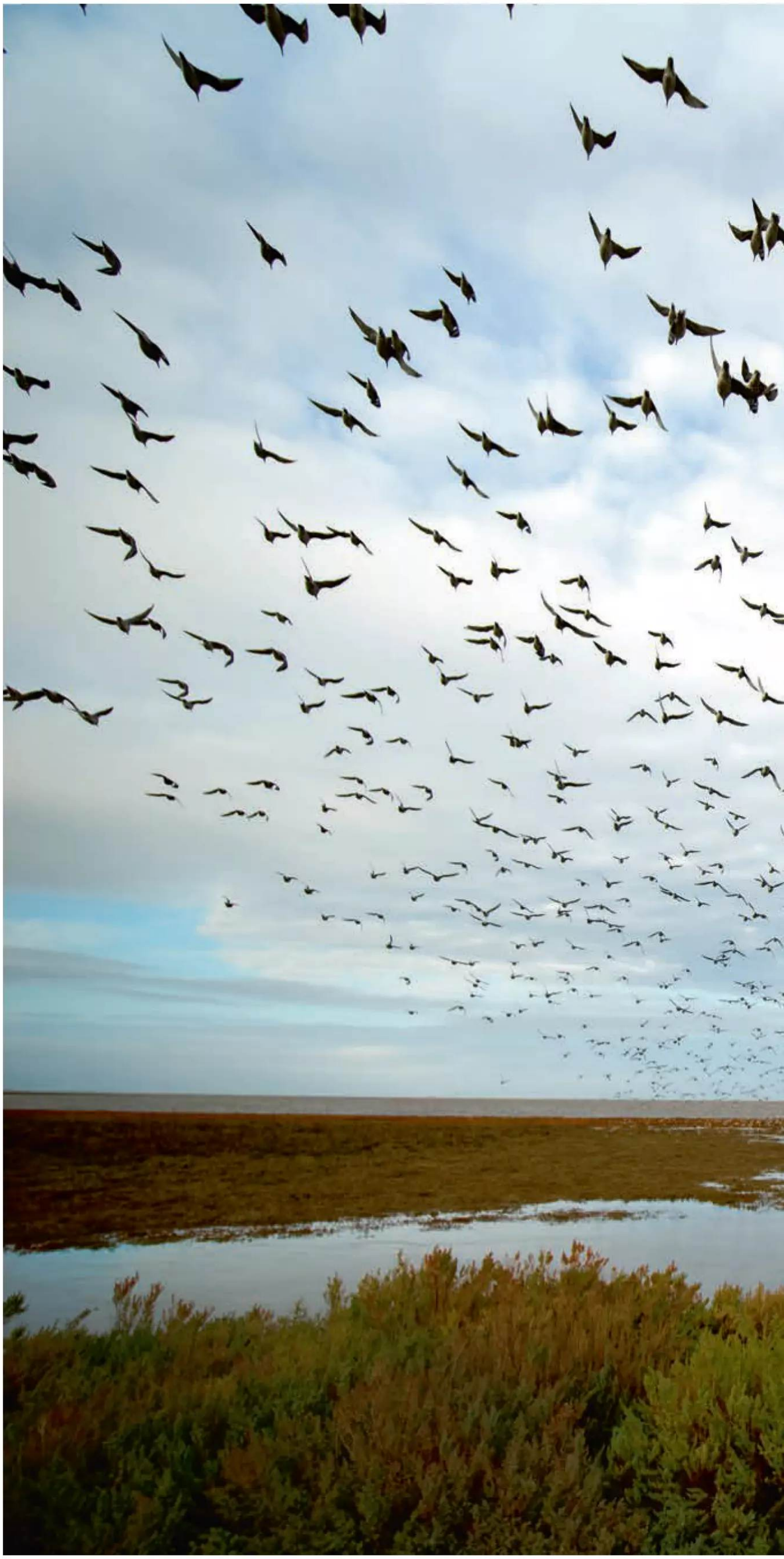


Snettisham, Norfolk

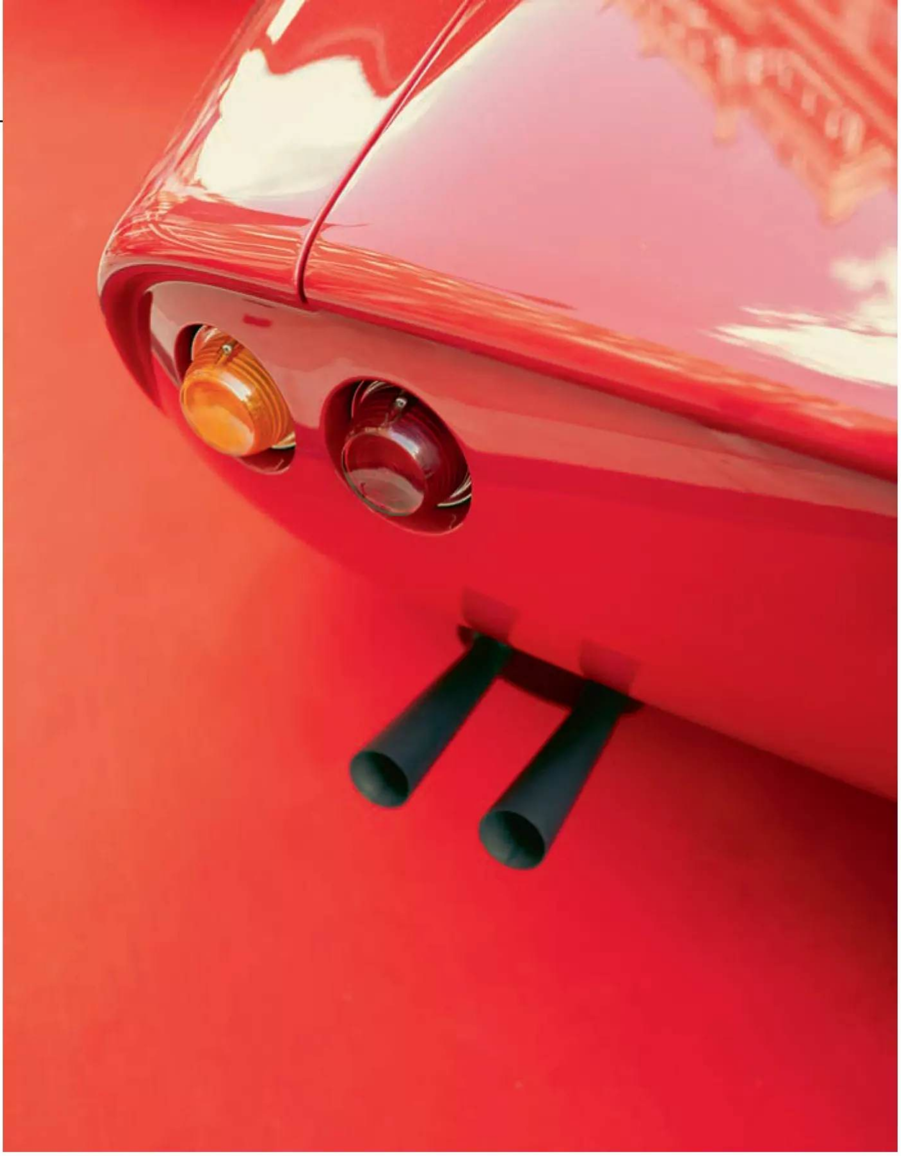
by Edward Russell

OM System OM-1 Mk2, Laowa 7.5mm, 1/2500sec, ISO 250

'Snettisham, on the North Norfolk coast, faces west across the Wash. When there is a very high tide (in this case 8.2m), all the birds – knot, dunlin, oystercatchers – are forced off the mudflats and land in the old gravel pits nearby. There can be up to 100,000 birds in the gravel pits. As the tide recedes, the birds fly out of the pits back onto the vast mudflats. There were a lot of people there on this high tide morning. The problem was deciding where to stand as the birds flew back to the mudflats. I guessed right on this occasion.'

Instagram: @edward__russell

We also liked...



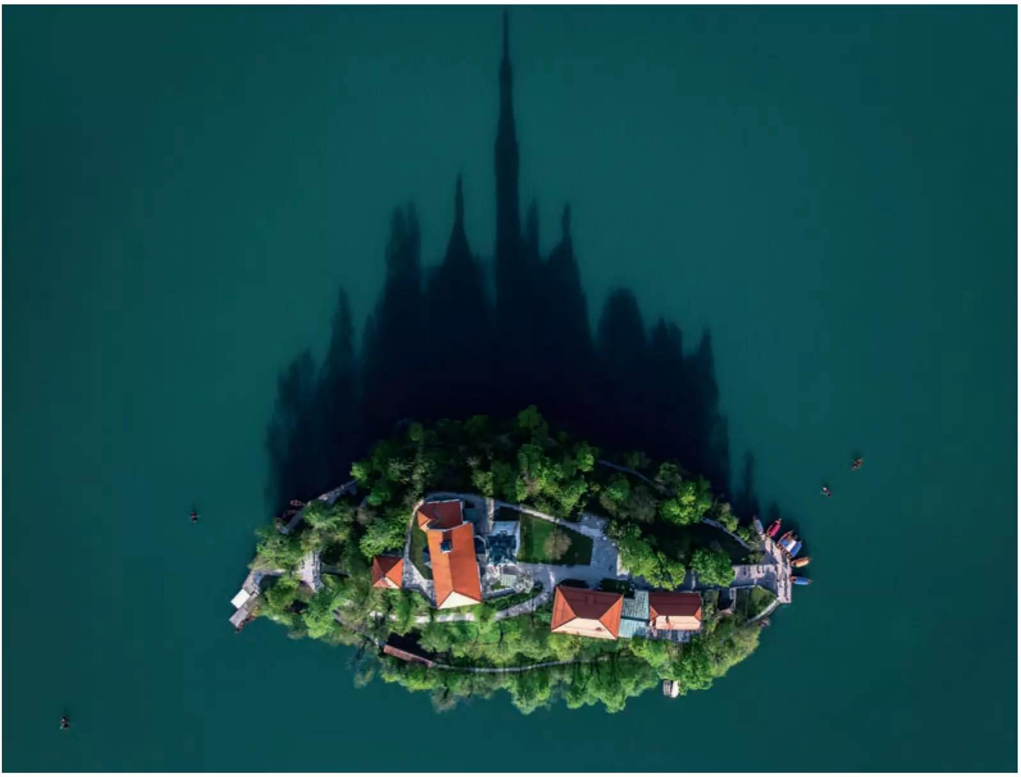
Concours, Savile Row by Kerry Szmidt

Leica Q2 28mm Summilux, 1/60sec at f/1.8, ISO 100

'This image captures luxury, symbolizing the art of automotive design. The smooth lines and vibrant red tones evoke a sense of speed, power, and craftsmanship. It represents the allure of performance engineering, where every detail is meticulously crafted for both aesthetic appeal and driving excellence which captured my attention.'

Instagram: @photography_is_dead_
Youtube: @photography_is_dead

It's good to share



Shadow of Faith by Maruša Uranjek

DJI Mavic 3, 1/320sec at f/6.3, ISO 100

'From above, Bled Island's church casts its towering shadow across the emerald waters of Lake Bled, Slovenia. Photographing the familiar is my greatest creative challenge, yet from the air, it becomes something else entirely. A reminder of how perspective reshapes not only what we see, but how we feel.'

Instagram: @marusauranjekphotography

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50-140mm F2.8 WR OIS XF	E+	£639	£599
50mm F1.8 AF - Samyang	E++	£159	£129
55-200mm F3.5-4.8 R LM OIS XF	E+	£299	£249
56mm F1.2 XF R WR	Mint-	£749	£739
56mm f1.4 - Tokina	E++	£239	£199
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12-60mm F3.5-5.6 G Vario OIS	E++	£179	£169
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14mm F2.8 AF FE - Samyang	Mint-	£379	£369
14mm F2.8 IF ED UMC AS FE -	Mint-	£249	
15mm F4.5 E Super Wide III	E++	£399	
16-28mm F2.8 DG DN C - Sigma	E++	£629	
16mm F1.4 DC DN C - Sigma	E++	£259	
18mm F2.8 Batis T* - Zeiss	Mint-	£719	
18mm F2.8 Cine T - SLR Magic	Mint-	£179	
20mm F1.8 ED AS UMC FE	E++	£179	
20mm F2.8 E	E++	£179	
24mm F3.5 DG DN C - Sigma	Mint-	£379	£349
24-105mm F4 G OSS FE	E+	£499	£479
28-200mm F2.8-5.6 Di III RXD	Mint-	£489	£469
35mm F1.8 FE	Mint-	£349	
35mm F2.8 AF FE - Samyang	E++	£149	
35mm F1.2 DG DN Art - Sigma	Mint-	£789	£769
35mm F1.4 Nokton Classic	E+	£339	
35mm F2 Apo Lan Asph	E++	£489	
35mm F2 Loxia - Zeiss	E++	£399	
40mm F2.5 G FE	E++	£469	£429
45mm F2.8 DG DN C - Sigma	Mint-	£319	£279
50mm F0.95 III Speedmaster	E++	£249	
85mm F1.4 DG HSM Art - Sigma	E++	£599	
50mm F2 E - TTArtisan	E++	£39	
50mm F1.8 OSS E	Mint-	£169	
55mm F1.8 ZA Sonnar T* FE	E++	£299	£279
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70-300mm F4.5-6.3 Di III RXD	E++	£299	
85mm F1.8 FE	E+	£439	£379
90mm F2.8 Macro G OSS FE	E++	£499	

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Left: The Honor 400 Pro takes high-quality photos and video without breaking the bank

Honor 400 Pro at a glance

- 200MP f/1.9 (1x) main camera, 24mm equivalent, OIS + EIS dual stabilisation (1/1.4in sensor)
- 50MP, f/2.4 telephoto camera, 68mm equivalent, OIS (3x optical), Sony IMX856 sensor
- 12MP, f/2.2 (0.6) ultrawide and macro camera, 16mm equivalent
- 50MP f/2 selfie camera with AF
- 4K 60/30fps rear and 4K 30fps front video recording

Why this phone is a 'zooming beast' – with genuinely useful AI tools

Deputy editor **Geoff Harris** discovers how the great-value Honor 400 Pro phone can help anyone take better photos and video

The Honor 400 Pro smartphone is a reminder that you don't need to spend a lot on a handset to get great photos and video, while also benefiting from AI editing features. A mid-range Android phone which takes high-quality photos and video without breaking the bank, its major attractions include a 200MP main camera and autofocus on all cameras, including the selfie one.

As you can see in the table above, it has an impressive spec sheet, but how does it all translate to helping you take better photos and video, as well as editing your shots so you can show them at their best?

The main (camera) attraction

We spent a weekend with the 400 Pro and found that the main camera took really pleasing images in a range of lighting conditions, as you'd expect considering the power on tap – a large 1/1.4in sensor, a fast f/1.9 aperture to let in as much light as possible and optical image stabilisation (OIS) to keep everything sharp. The 24mm equivalent focal length delivers natural-looking

Great results for landscape from the main camera

Left: Harcourt Classic is ideal for atmospheric black & white portraits

images with plenty of dynamic range. Auto HDR can be easily turned on if you need images with even more punch, and you can also shoot in raw via the Pro mode, enabling you to fine-tune shutter speed, ISO etc as required. I also got good results by turning on the Motion Sensing Capture feature, enabling Auto Capture to capture more dynamic action shots – people walking, pets playing and so on.

Night mode is impressive too – the Glastonbury shop window display pictured above is rich and detail in colour, with noise well controlled.

Left: An impressive level of architectural detail can also be easily captured

Ultra-wide and telephoto winner

With a 16mm equivalent focal length you can easily capture wide sweeping vistas with detailed depth of field using the ultra-wide camera, and it works well as a macro camera. There is also a Super Macro option that uses the main wideangle and ultrawide cameras.

What really impressed us about the Honor 400 Pro, however, was the telephoto performance. This phone really is a zooming beast! The 50MP telephoto camera, based on a Sony IMX856 sensor and again with autofocus and OIS, captures an impressive level of detail with its 3x optical zoom.

Should you need to go beyond this, zooming in as far as 50x thanks to AI Super Zoom is a practical option. Simply slide the zoom bar or pinch the screen, ensuring that the AI Superzoom icon is activated.

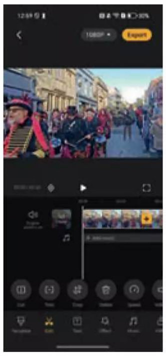
Portrait power

The Harcourt portrait modes are a unique feature of Honor phones, enable you to replicate the 'look' of the famous Parisian portrait studio. There is a choice of Harcourt Vibrant, Colour, Classic (black & white), along with a small but effective range of classic film simulations. All of which save a lot of time editing shots after you have taken them.

AI tools you can actually use

There is a lot of anxiety about generative AI and how it will negatively affect photography, but when it comes to the Honor 400 Pro, the AI tools are genuinely useful in helping to improve your shots without totally changing them. AI editing tools are easily applied from the gallery of photos (tap on AI Edit). As well as quick and intuitive tools for removing distractions from pictures, like photo bombers or bins, AI Cutout makes it easy to select and cut out your subject, as with this cow (below) – you can also modify the background, choose a transparent background (as here) or a solid colour background. It's great for creating photo montages or photo art. The AI Outpainting, meanwhile, enables you to 'extend' a shot if you've cropped in a little too tight.

Right: Quick cutouts are a cinch, thanks to AI



No video slouch, either

Out of the box, you can record 4K video at 60fps, which is very impressive for an affordable mid-range phone, and videos can be easily enhanced with AI (without them looking unnatural). Slow motion and night video modes are available, too, so this is a great phone for filmmakers.

Returning to the AI editing features, there are also tools for quickly editing your videos; they are refreshingly easy to use and a big time-saver.

Below: Glastonbury shop window display, taken using Night mode

Don't miss this great Black Friday deal

Black Friday isn't until the end of the month but you can still save £200 on the Honor 400 Pro with a £200 discount voucher, bringing the price right down to £449! Full details at **bit.ly/400prodeal**

APOY 2025

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Amateur Photographer of the Year

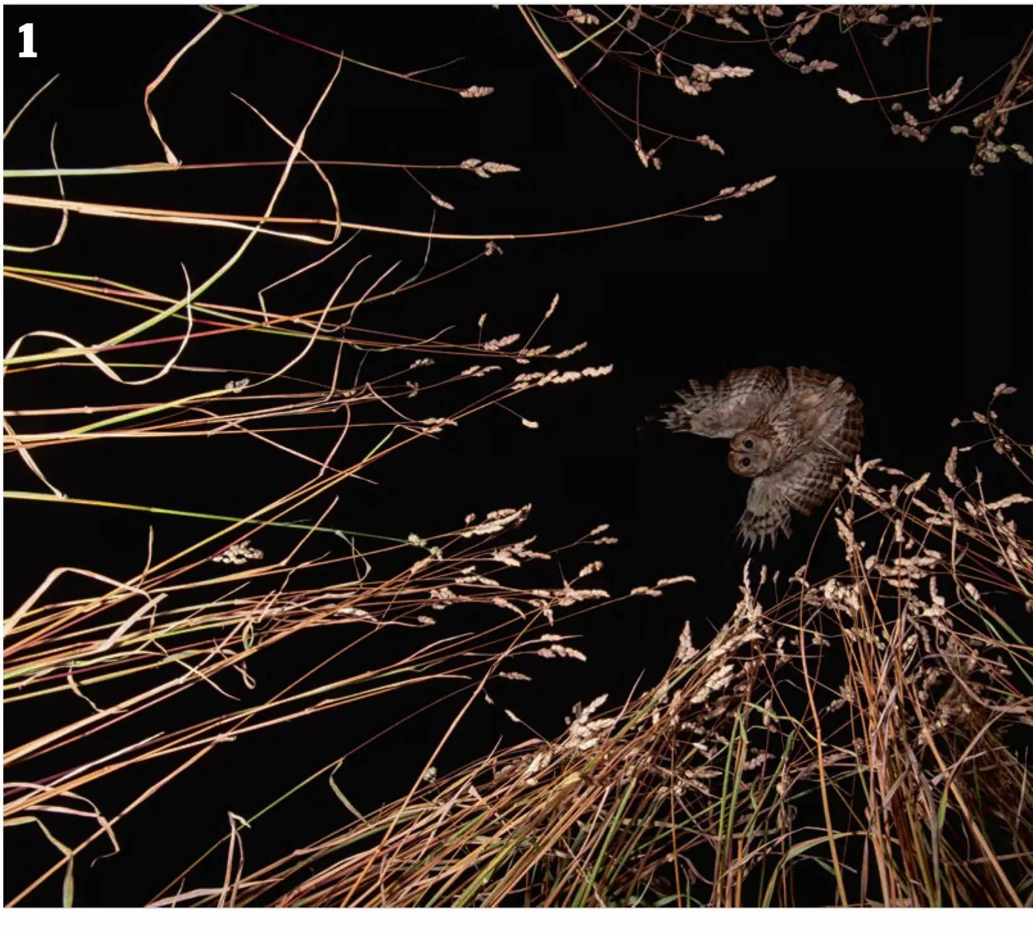
Here are the top ten images uploaded to Photocrowd from Round Six, Night and Low Light, with comments by the AP team and our guest judge

Round Six

Night and Low Light

Low light is like catnip to the photographer. As light drops and reduces, it gives dimension, depth, colour and atmosphere to a photographic image, allowing previously ordinary scenes to gradually come alive. Low light has the power to either reduce a potential composition to its basic elements, or it can introduce a riot of conflicting tones and colour temperatures. It's no wonder that generations of photographers have exploited it to their advantage. This is always a particularly strong round, and seems to unleash entrants' creativity – and this year has been no exception.

1



1 Eric Browett, UK

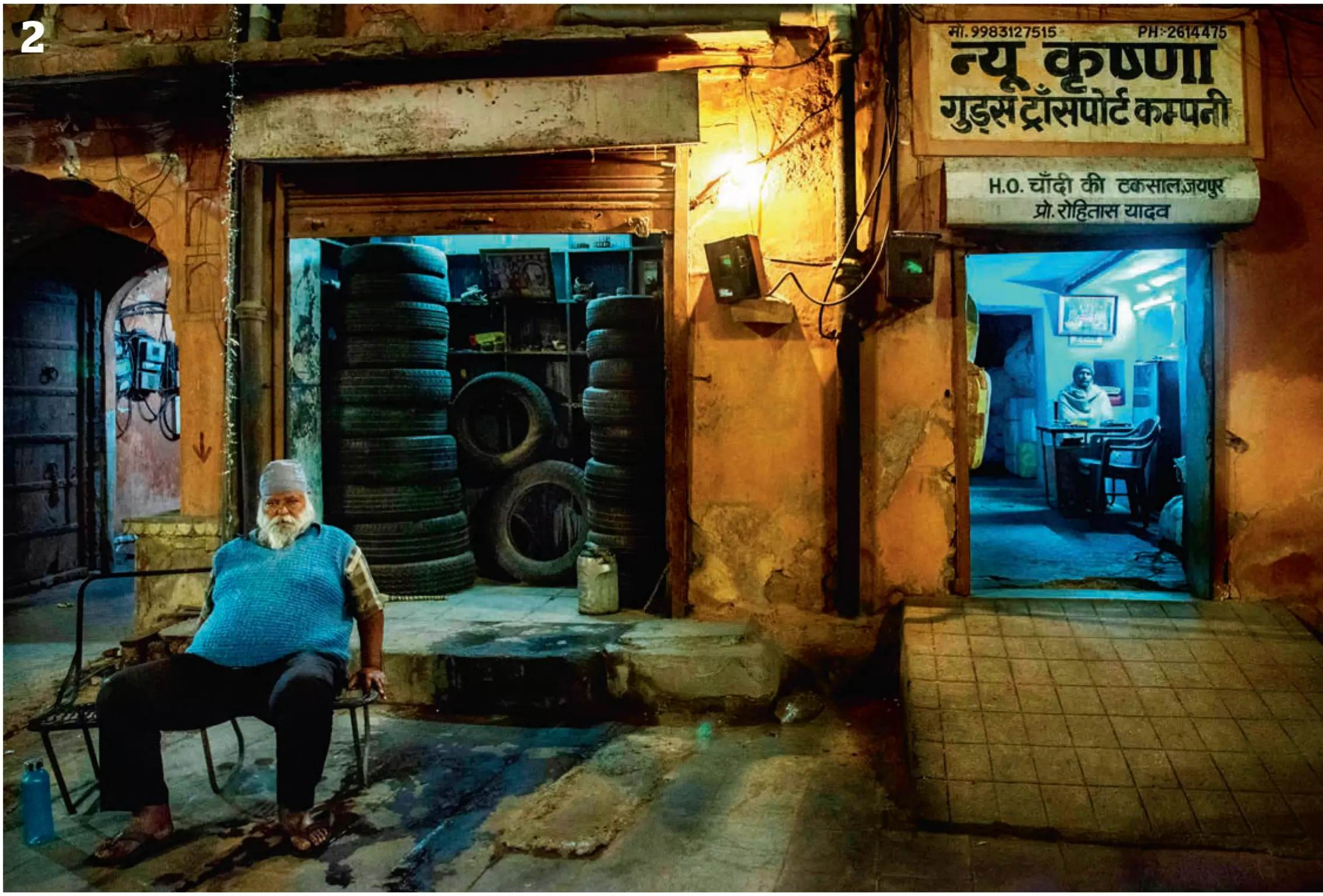
Death from above 100pts

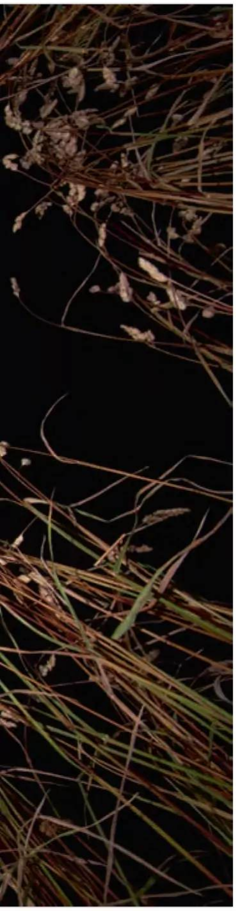
Nikon D500, 10-20mm at 13mm, 1/250sec at f/18, ISO 400

Guest judge Sarah Lee says:

'For me, this image was a clear winner. Firstly, the composition is superb. It's so confident and daring to use a flash that way against the night sky with a subject as fleeting as an owl in flight. The grass adds a real sense of drama and movement. The relationship between the owl and the landscape is vividly drawn, the flashlit fronds perfectly complementing the owl's feathers frozen in the same burst of light. There is something slightly unnerving, too, about the image, like a piece of folk art. I mean this as a compliment – I absolutely love this image.'

2





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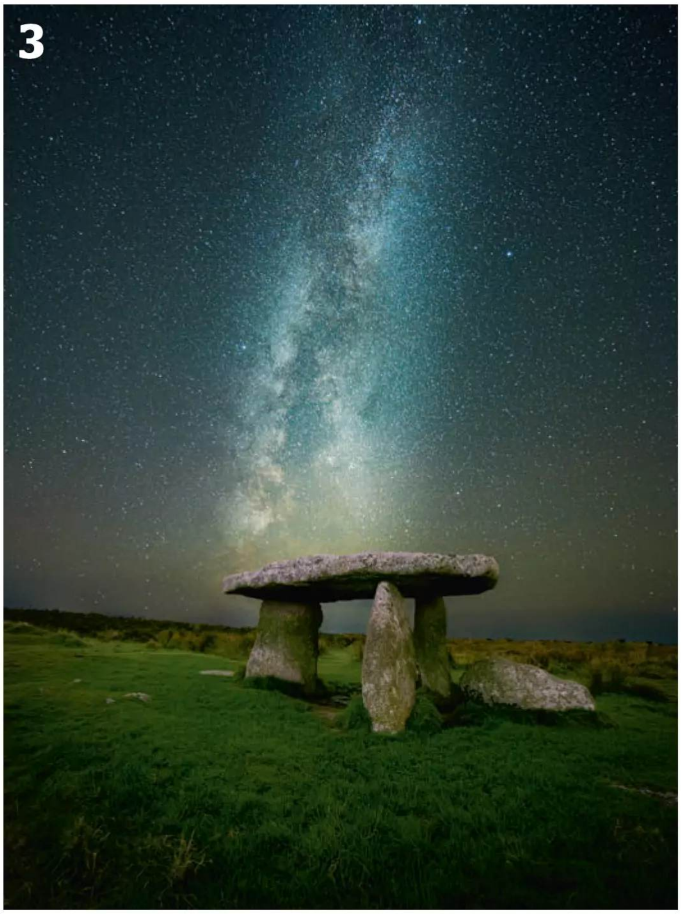


2 Sirsendu Gayen, India
Two old men 90pts

Nikon D750, 24-120mm at 24mm, 1/40sec at f/7.1, ISO 2000

Sirsendu's image invites us into the worlds of these two men in a quiet and compelling way. The man on the left appears to have finished a hard day's work, while the one on the right looks as if he is awaiting business. But it's the balance of composition and colour that makes this image so memorable. The man's blue tank top is echoed by the blue rectangle of light, and both are set against a backdrop of artificial orange. Sirsendu's powers of observation and his ability to create connection, both between the elements of the frame and between viewer and subject, are to be commended.

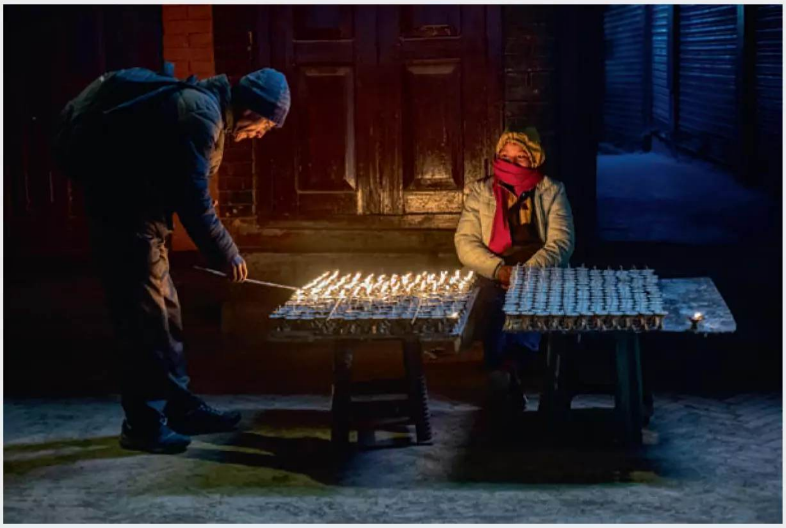
3 Ethan Scorer, UK
Gateway to the stars 80pts

Canon EOS R6 Mark II, 14mm, 6min at f/4, ISO 6400

It'll come as no surprise to learn that there were many Milky Way submissions to this round. So, what makes this one stand out? For the judges, there was a mysticism to the scene, with the ancient dolmen (Lanyon Quoit, in Cornwall) in the foreground and the idea that those who built it might have looked up at the same night sky, billions of years old.There's a sense of vastness both in terms of space and time that Ethan has captured sensitively and skilfully. He says this was only his second ever attempt at astrophotography – let's hope he has many more to come.

Best of the clubs

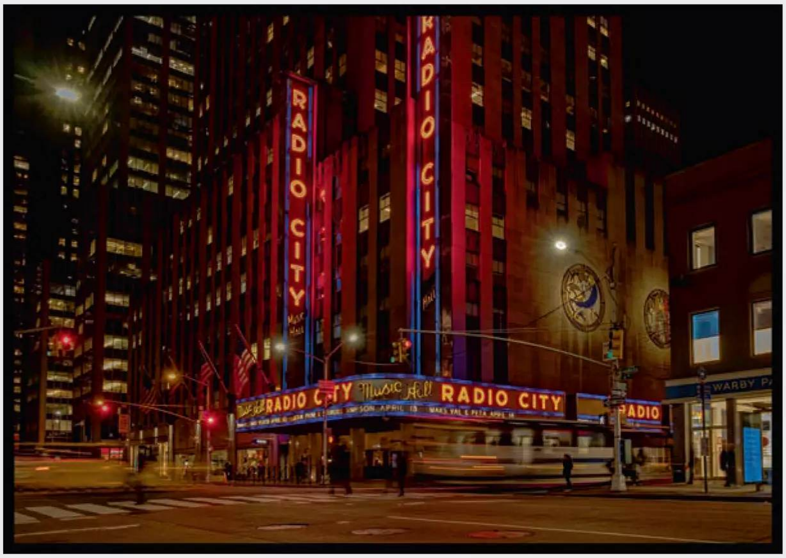
Each round, we shine a spotlight on a selection of excellent entries from the many camera clubs that enter APOY



Charles Ashton, Kempsey Camera Club Butter lamps

Unknown

It takes skill to distil a street scene to its simplest form, and Charles has done a great job of it here. His timing and composition are spot on, and he has managed all the highlights, shadows and colours very well.



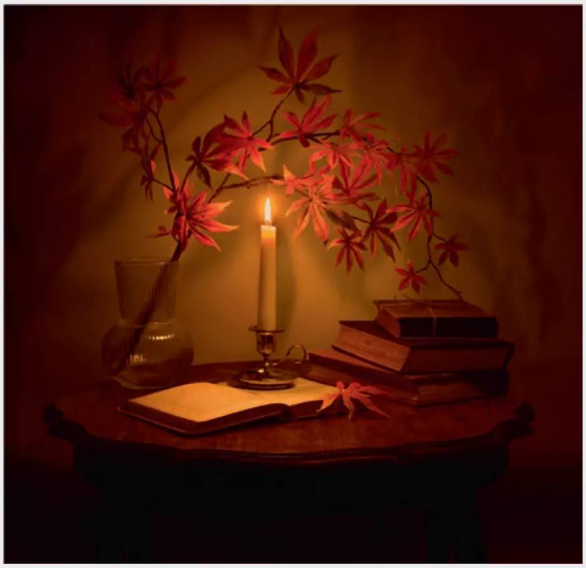
Steven Pinniger, Plymouth Camera Club
Radio City by night

Fujifilm X-T2, 18-55mm at 18mm, 1/2sec at f/6.4, ISO 200

Neon city lights make an excellent low-light subject, as does this New York City landmark. There's a good balance of stillness and motion in Steven's well-captured shot.

CAMERA CLUBS LEADERS

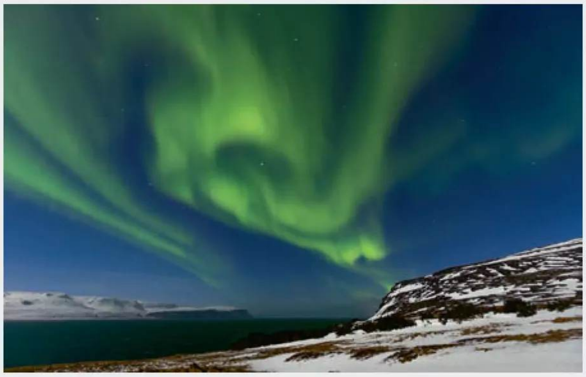
1	Plymouth Camera Club	350
2	London: Hampstead Photographic Society	175
3	Mid-Somerset Camera Club	160
4	Bristol Photographic Society	135
5	Launceston Camera Club	130



Tracey Small, Launceston Camera Club
Evening glow

Fujifilm X-H2S, 16-55mm at 31mm, 2sec at f/11, ISO 160

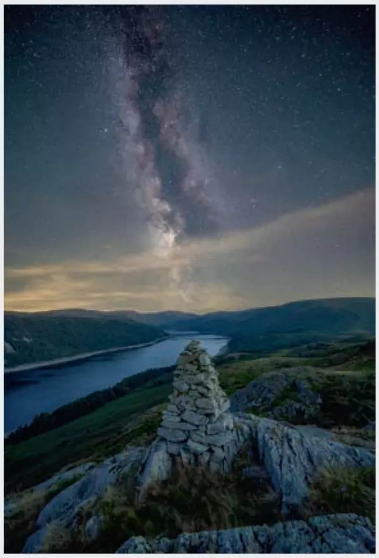
A low-light image with a difference. A still-life can be tricky to set up, but Tracey's careful placement and composition is excellent, as is the gorgeous glow of the candle light.



Steve Field, Bristol Photographic Society
Honstrandir aurora

Canon EOS R5, 16-35mm at 16mm, 5sec at f/5, ISO 400

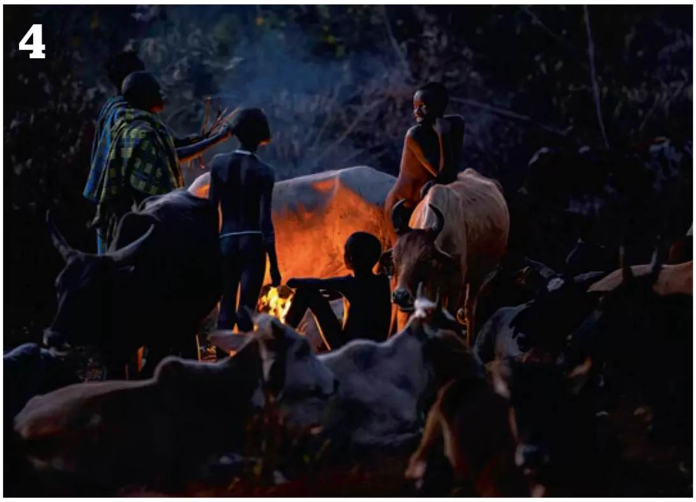
A stunning aurora shot, where Steve has made it appear as if the waves of light are rising from the land itself. The snowy foreground works well as an anchor for the scene.



Mark Hetherington, Penrith Camera Club
Sky full of stars

Sony A7 Mark IV, 14mm, 10sec at f/13, ISO 100

Mark has aligned his shot very sensitively, with the beacon just breaking into the line of the reservoir below, and, of course, the breathtaking Milky Way rising from it.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4 **Bircan Harper, UK** Suri boys, Omo Valley, Ethiopia 70pts

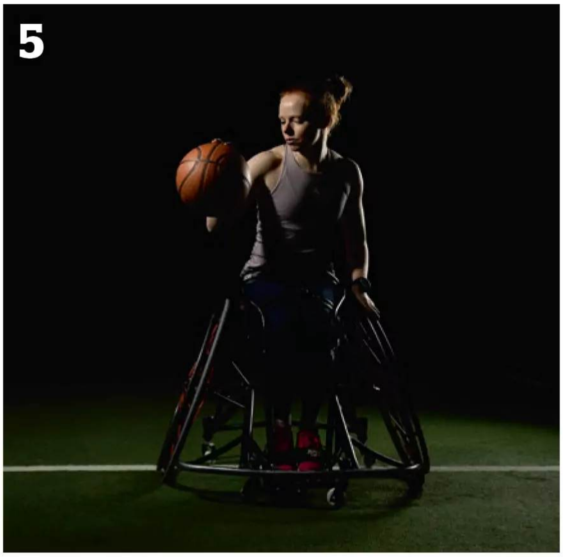
Nikon Z9, 135mm, 1/100sec at f/1.8, ISO 12,800

Bircan's use of such a wide aperture here takes our attention straight to the young boy on the right, his profile lit only by the flames of the fire. The interaction between all the boys is delightful, and the out-of-focus cattle in the foreground serve as an anchor to the overall scene.

5 **Rowan May, UK** Basketball at night 60pts

Canon EOS R6 Mark II, 24-105mm at 35mm, 1/125sec at f/5, ISO 100

This is a powerful portrait of Rowan's wife, who was in training for the Invictus Games. He has set up the shot with precision, getting her to place her wheelchair on the court line, and setting up his lights so that the background falls away into complete darkness. He has illuminated his subject's face and the basketball with skill, making them the focal point of the image, with the remaining lights outlining her arm and the wheels of the chair. It's a stylish and slick portrait that is a fresh take on the low-light theme, and has been extremely well executed.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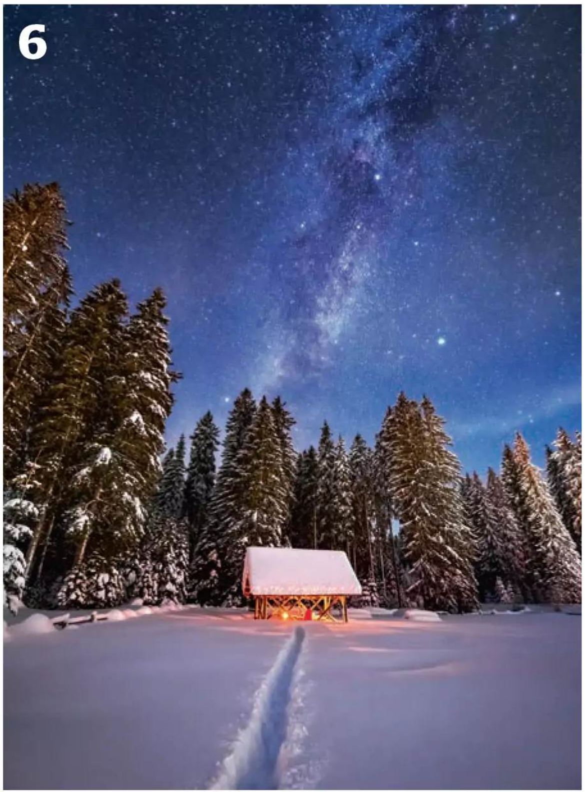
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6 **Ales Krivec, Slovenia** Under the starry night 50pts

Nikon D810A, 14-24mm at 14mm, 25sec at f/2.8, ISO 6400

Ales says he always carries candles with him on night shoots, as he never knows when they might come in handy for adding a touch of warmth. They are certainly a stroke of genius here, introducing a welcoming orange that balances out the icy-blue sky and deep snow. The path through the white snow leads the eye beautifully towards the hut, and then on upward through the trees to the breathtaking sky above. The perspective provided by the 14mm focal length gives the impression of the trees leaning into the composition, which enhances the fairytale feel of the scene.

Winning kit from Camera Centre UK

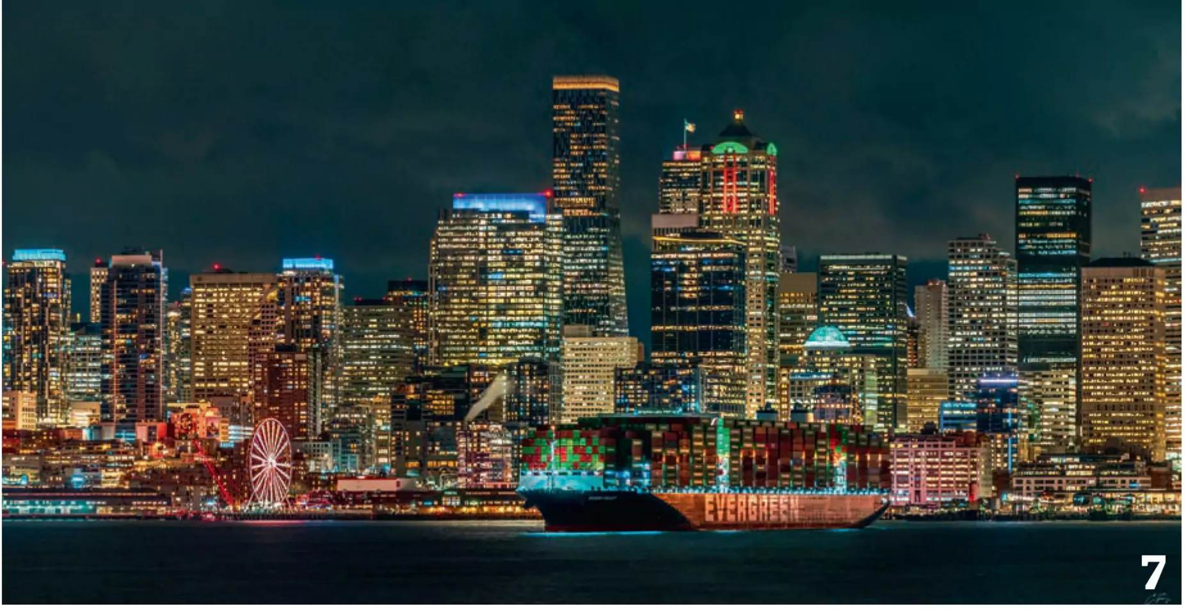
What gear did our top ten photographers use?

The fastest APS-C DSLR Nikon ever made, the D500 was Eric Browett's camera of choice for his winning shot. It features a 20.9MP DX CMOS sensor, a 'remarkable' 153-point phase-detection AF system and a standard ISO range of 100-51,200. Our five-star review in AP concluded: 'The D500 is not so much an expensive APS-C camera as a pro camera with an APS-C sensor.' A second-hand D500 can be purchased from Camera Centre UK for £799.

In fifth place, Rowan May used a Canon EF24-105mm f/4L IS USM lens. When travel photographer Sue O'Connell was featured in AP she said this was her go-to lens: 'It has the perfect combination of range and quality… This lens is more or less permanently attached to my Canon EOS 6D.' You can buy one from Camera Centre UK for £1,179.

Taking seventh spot, Charles Tracy used a 70-200mm f/2.8 lens for his city scene. Sigma's 70-200mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM Sport is a fine example of this focal range, and was described in AP as a 'classic premium telephoto… that seriously undercuts own-brand alternatives'. It is constructed of 24 elements in 22 groups with 11 diaphragm blades, has a hypersonic motor to keep focus operation fast and quiet, and is equipped with optical image stabilisation. A used example is available at Camera Centre UK for £699.

To see the full range, visit www.cameracentreuk.com



7 Charles Tracy, US
Ever Feat in Seattle
45pts

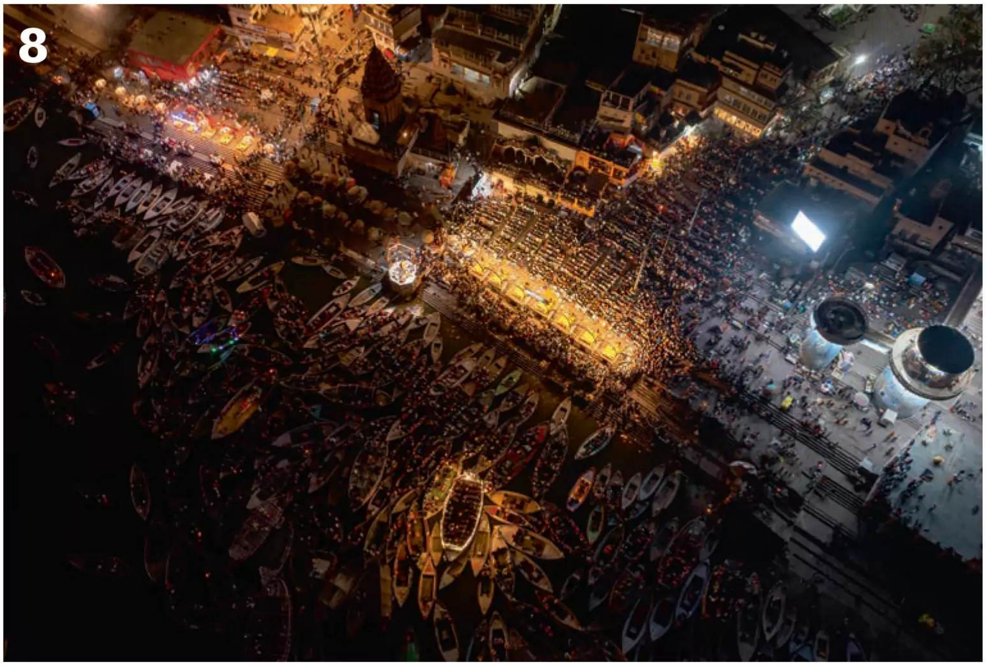
Nikon Z6, 70-200mm at 200mm, 96sec at f/5, ISO 100

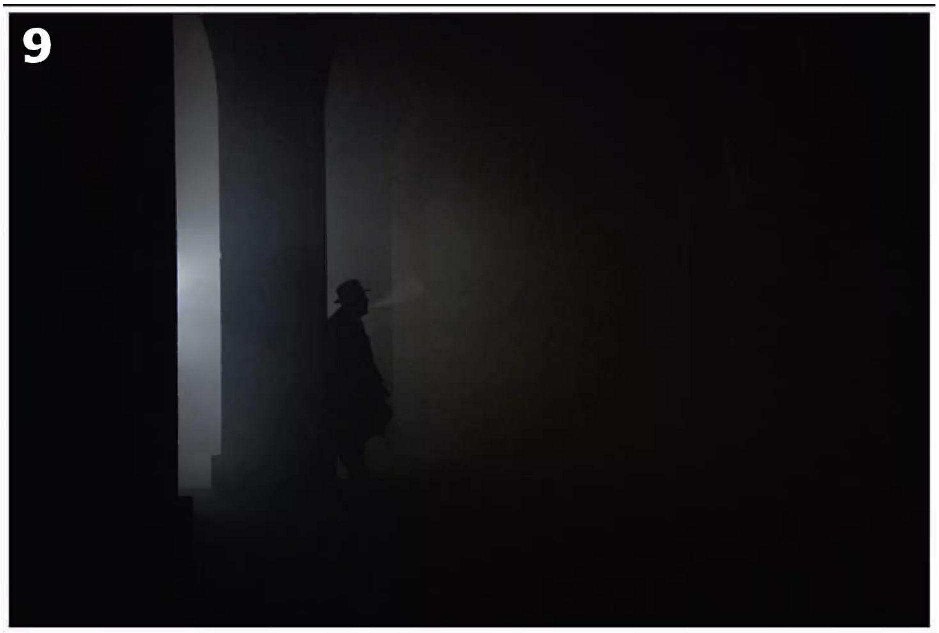
Dazzling is the best way of describing this image. The lights are so overwhelming, the viewer has to take a moment to make out the shape of the container ship in the foreground. It would be easy to call it futuristic, except this is very much the present, and all the more powerful for it.

8 Azim Khan Ronnie, France
Ganga Aarti at Varanasi 40pts

DJI Mavic 2 Pro, 28mm equiv, 1/3sec at f/2.8, ISO 100

This astonishing religious ceremony, the Ganga Aarti, takes place every evening in Varanasi, India, to celebrate the sacredness of the Ganges River. Azim's breathtaking drone shot captures the extraordinary beauty of the event, with thousands in attendance both on land and in boats on the river. He's done a great job of picking out the parts of the scene that literally glow orange, and the judges liked the way the frame is divided diagonally from top left to bottom right, with the glowing boat in the centre helping to anchor the scene. The only slight criticism is the grey area to the right, which unbalances things slightly, but other than that it's a great shot of exactly the quality we've come to expect from Azim.

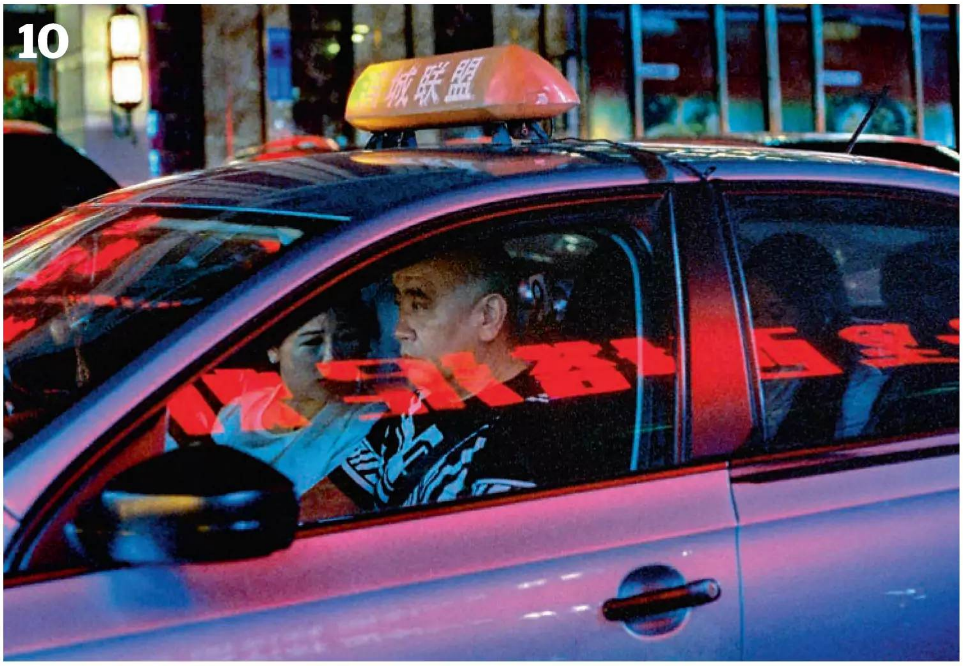




9 George Denscombe, UK
Dark night 35pts

Nikon D7500, 18-105mm at 35mm, 1/50sec at f/8, ISO 2000

It takes a daring photographer to create an image that is quite as low-key as this one, but George has done an excellent job of retaining a minimal amount of detail, but making sure it's just enough. The silhouette of the man is clean and precise – so much so that we can even make out the outline of the cigarette he's holding in his hand, and the exhaled smoke it's responsible for. The tones of the varying background shades that run from left to right across the frame have also been beautifully managed. A wonderfully sparse scene that needs no more detail than that which is already there.



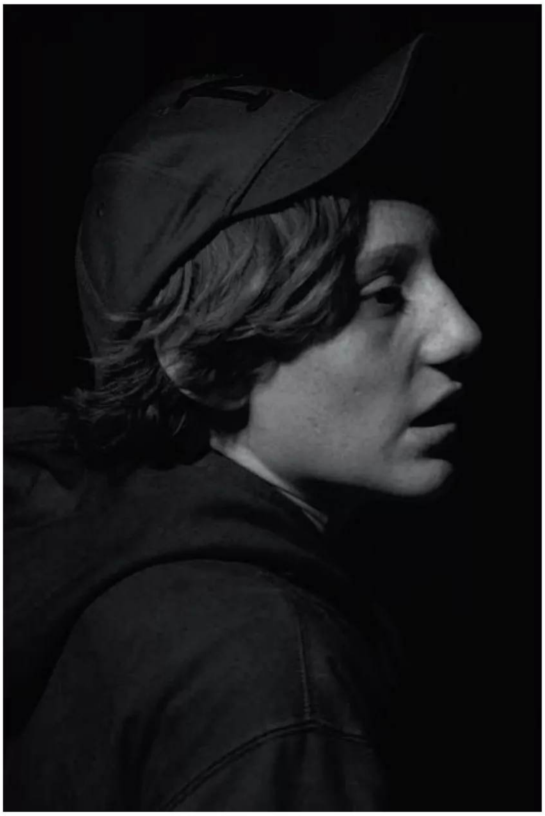
10 Zac Laws, UK
Night taxi, China 30pts
Canon AE-1, CineStill 800T

It's pretty rare for us to see entries to APOY shot on film these days, but here the qualities of the tungsten-balanced emulsion help make this image sing. Zac has captured a moment unfolding in fascinating fashion. The woman appears to be upset or angry about something, while the male driver stares straight ahead. In the rear, a young woman ignores it all. The vignette is enveloped in a mix of artificial lighting that is chaotic but not confusing – it only serves to emphasise the movie-like quality.

ROUND SIX WINNER, YOUNG APOY

Hamish Herridge, UK
Jamblusse en fete 25 100pts
Canon EOS 80D, 70-200mm at 149mm, 1/320sec at f/4, ISO 4000

Hamish's wonderfully characterful and atmospheric low-light portrait almost looks as if it could have been taken at the turn of the 20th century (were it not for the logo on the baseball cap). There's real depth to this image: it's a beautifully candid moment that captures a pensive expression. The fact it's in profile means we don't know whether the young man is turning towards or away from the camera, or has something in the distance caught his attention? There's just enough separation between him and the inky-black background, so he doesn't merge into the darkness, and the lack of context makes everything that little bit more mysterious. The range of tones is excellent, too.



The 2025 leaderboards

With the 70 points she earned for her fourth-placed image, Bircan Harper has jumped from joint fifth in the previous leaderboard to the top spot in this one, with a lead of five and ten points respectively over her nearest rivals. However, we are only just past the halfway point in the contest, and with another four rounds still to go, there's still time for many more changes to the leaderboard. There's a wider gap between first and tenth places in our Young APOY competition, with Hary Hammad and Ben Hancock-Smith putting clear water between themselves and the others, so we're excited to see what the next four rounds bring!

APOY

1	Bircan Harper	180
2	Erika Howard	175
3	Azim Khan Ronnie	170
4	Ales Krivec	150
5=	Lynn Fraser	140
5=	Matteo Strassera	140
7	Sirsendu Gayen	130
8=	Eric Browett	120
8=	John Seager	120
10=	Colin Griffiths	110
10=	Philip Tomlinson	110

YOUNG APOY

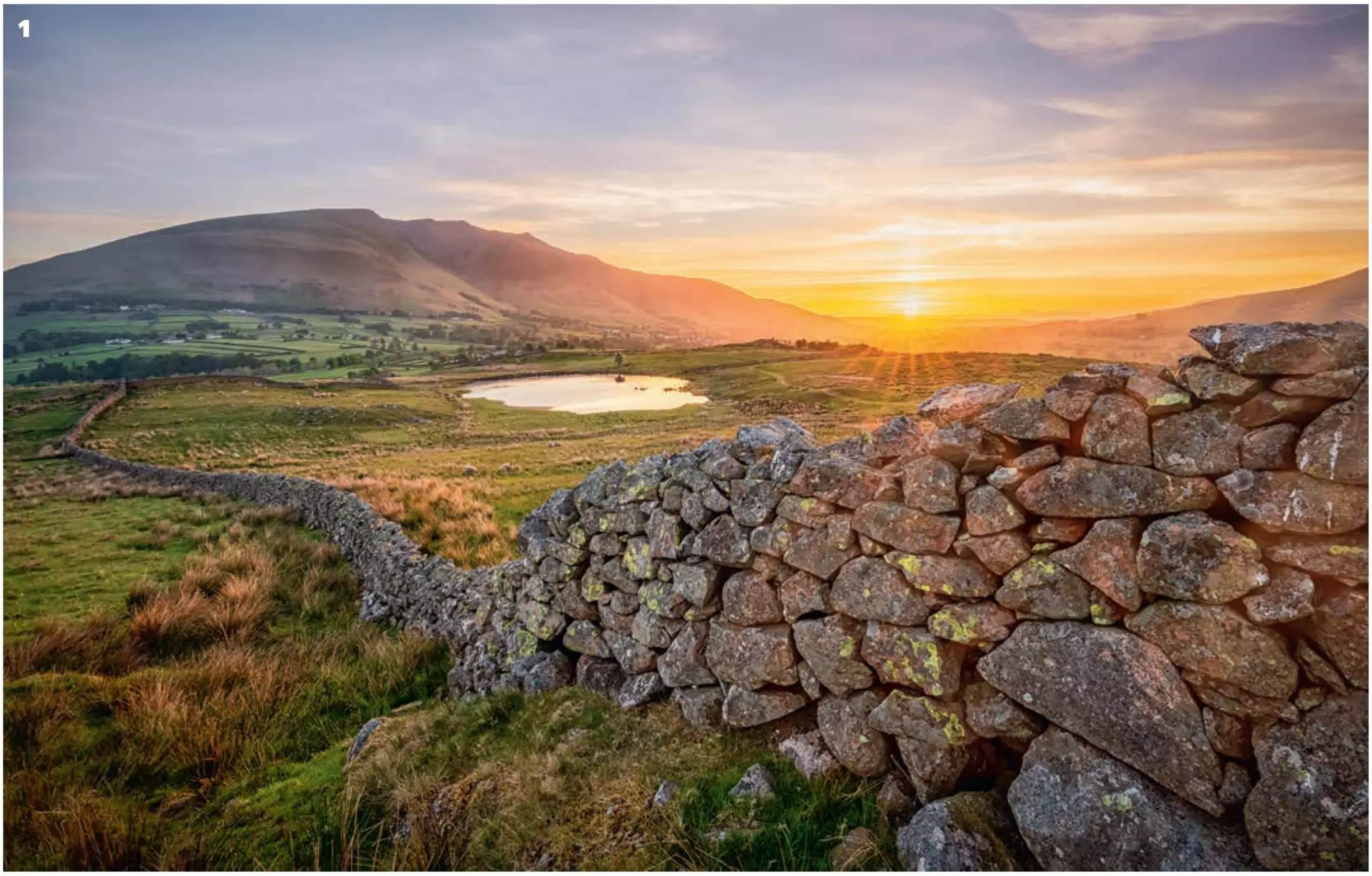
1	Hary Hammad	250
2	Ben Hancock-Smith	235
3	Charlie Gil	165
4	Matteo Botta	160
5=	Edward Lee Davies	110
5=	Phoenix Robertson	110
7=	Hamish Herridge	100
7=	Jack Cavanagh	100
7=	Jake Randazzo	100
7=	Lucy Monckton	100
7=	Valentin	100
7=	Youssef Ahmed	100

To see more images from APOY Round Six and Young APOY, visit **amateurphotographer.com/APOY**

Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them

1



Mark Hetherington, Penrith, UK

About Mark

Mark is retired and a member of Penrith Camera Club and ARPS. See more of his work at Instagram @markshetherington

How did you get into photography?

From an early age, I was lucky to be immersed in the outdoors, fell-walking with my late father, which later evolved into a passion for rock climbing and fell running in the Lake District. During the COVID lockdown in 2020, travel restrictions meant I could no longer visit the Lakes to pursue these hobbies. On a whim, I bought a second-hand camera to occupy myself closer to home. Little did I know how profoundly that simple decision would change my life, as a growing fascination with photography soon became a true obsession.

What do you love about photography?

I love to explore the Lake District with my camera, driven by a desire to document and share its ever-changing moods and timeless beauty. From sweeping mountain vistas to quiet valleys, from misty tarns to glassy lakes, I love it all and it brings me great joy, wonder, and peace when I am immersed in the landscape. I especially appreciate the quiet hours of sunrise and sunset, when the world is still and the light is soft. These are the moments when I feel most connected to nature and when the Lake District reveals its soul, reminding me why this place means so much to me.

Favourite subjects

Although I occasionally explore other genres such as wildlife and astrophotography, my true passion lies in landscape photography. As a rock climber, I have travelled widely across the UK and Europe and visited America and Australia. This has deepened my appreciation for the natural world and its diverse landscapes, and this now profoundly shapes my photography.

How and where do you find inspiration?

When I first started photography in 2020, I drew inspiration from the work of great landscape photographers like Ansel Adams and Joe Cornish. Inspiration now comes from many sources, such as social media, books, and travel beyond my home in the Lake District. Recent travels to Scotland, Slovenia and Iceland have inspired my photography and my passion, to continue exploring and developing my photography.

What was your first camera?

Panasonic Lumix LX100.

Tewet Tarn Sunrise

1 Sunrise spills over Tewet Tarn, casting warm light across the landscape. The drystone wall winds its way, guiding the eye towards Blencathra and the awakening beauty of the Lake District. This a HDR blend of five images due to the high dynamic range of this scene.

Sony A7 IV, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II, 1/15sec at f/22, ISO 100

NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK AND EU RESIDENTS ONLY

ai amazinginternet
AWARD-WINNING WEBSITES

Reader Portfolio winners receive a one-year subscription to a **Gold Portfolio Series website** worth £300. UK domain name included.

Amazing Internet designs, builds and hosts amazing websites for creative people and companies. It has specialised in creating websites for photographers since 1999 and has services to suit all budgets. Whether you need a simple template-based site for £60 per year or a fully bespoke site, they've got you covered. www.amazinginternet.com

Submit your images
See page 3 for details of how to submit. You could see your photos here in a future issue! Please note: the prize is subject to change.

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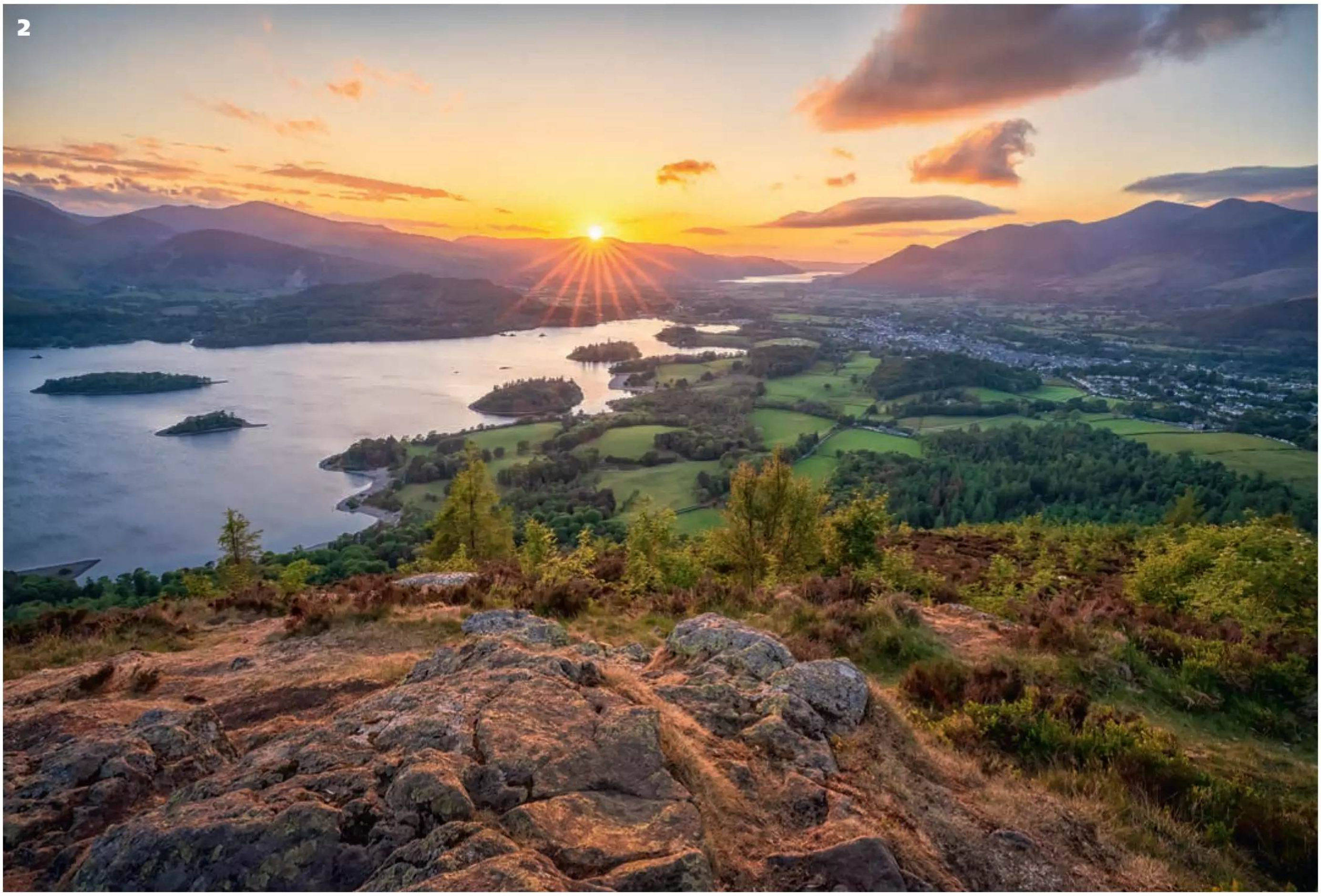
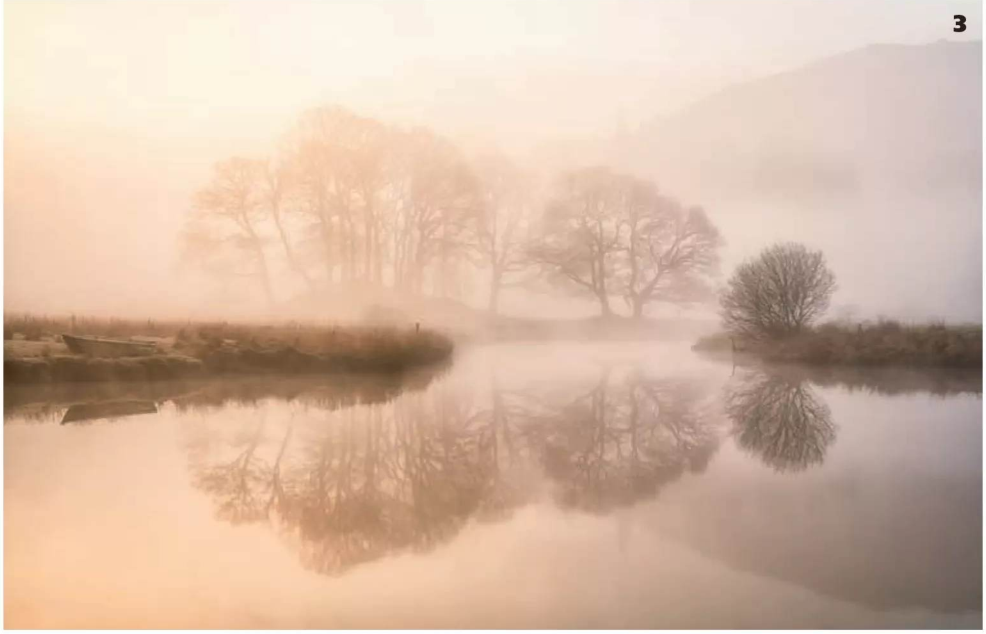


Walla Crag Sunset

2 Golden hour glory from Walla Crag, Borrowdale. The setting sun casts its final rays across Derwentwater, while Skiddaw provides an impressive backdrop. A narrow aperture of f/22 creates the sunstar as the sun dips below the horizon.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II, 1/200sec at f/22, ISO 400

3



Brathay Mist

3 Landscape photographers love mist and the river Brathay close to Ambleside is a popular location for such conditions. On this particular morning, my patience was rewarded as the light broke through the mist creating sublime conditions for landscape photography.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 24-105mm F4 G, 1/50sec at f/13, ISO 100

Current kit
Sony A7 IV camera
Sony 14mm F1.8 GM
Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II
Sony 24-105mm F4 G
Sony 100-400mm F4.5-5.6 GM
Tamron 50-300mm F4.5-6.3
Sony 1.4 teleconverter
Kase Revolution magnetic filters
Benro Tortoise 34CLV tripod
Kingjoy C85 tripod
DJI Mini 4 Pro drone
Mindshift Backlight 26L and 36L backpacks.

Favourite lens
I have a couple, but I do love my Sony 16-35mm F2.8 as it is a versatile lens, very sharp and perfect for my landscape photography.

Favourite accessory
Kase Revolution magnetic filters were a game-changer as they are so light, quick, easy to use and high quality.

Dream purchase
Sony A1.

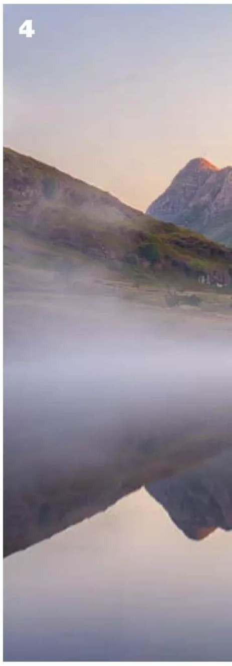
What software do you use for editing?
I mostly use Adobe Lightroom with occasional use of the DxO Nik Collection and Photoshop for focus stacking and astro editing.

Favourite photographers
I admire many photographers, but early on I was inspired by the work of Joe Cornish, Guy Edwardes and a local photography friend, Jonny Gios. Recent coaching with Chris Sale, a local photographer I admire, has helped me tremendously to progress my skills.

Favourite photography books
One of my favourite photography books is my signed copy of *First Light* by Joe Cornish. When I first got into landscape photography this was one of the first books I bought. I still return to it often for motivation and inspiration.

Favourite tips
Photograph what inspires and motivates you and for yourself. Perseverance is also important in order to continue to progress your photography. Try to practise in all weathers to give yourself maximum photographic opportunities.

About your pictures
Having been brought up in the outdoors, it has always been about the real, unforgettable moments experienced in the landscape, something AI can never replicate. I'm especially drawn to the Lake District and wild places, exploring with my camera in hand, driven by a desire to capture and share their timeless beauty and ever-changing moods.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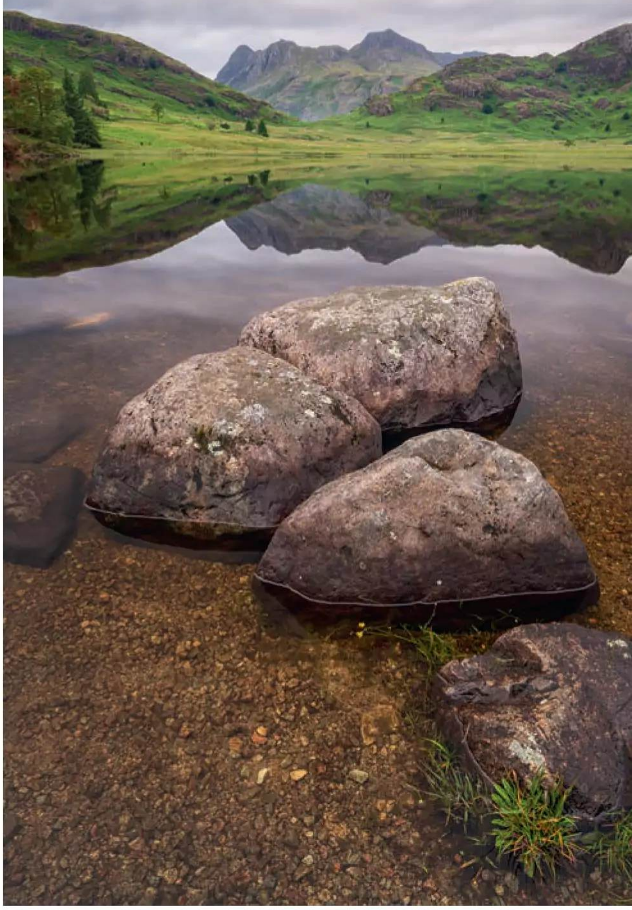
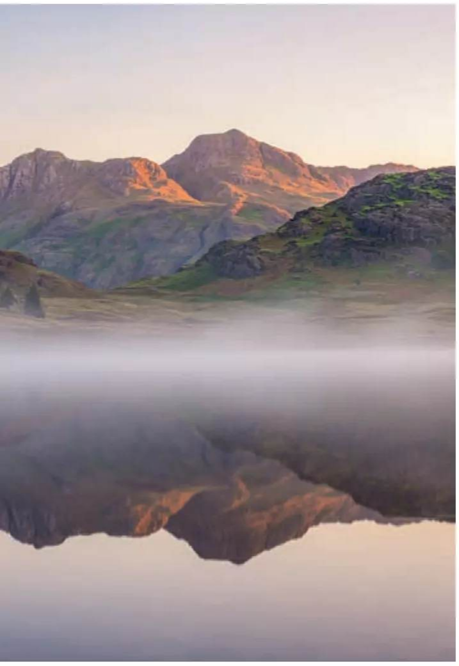
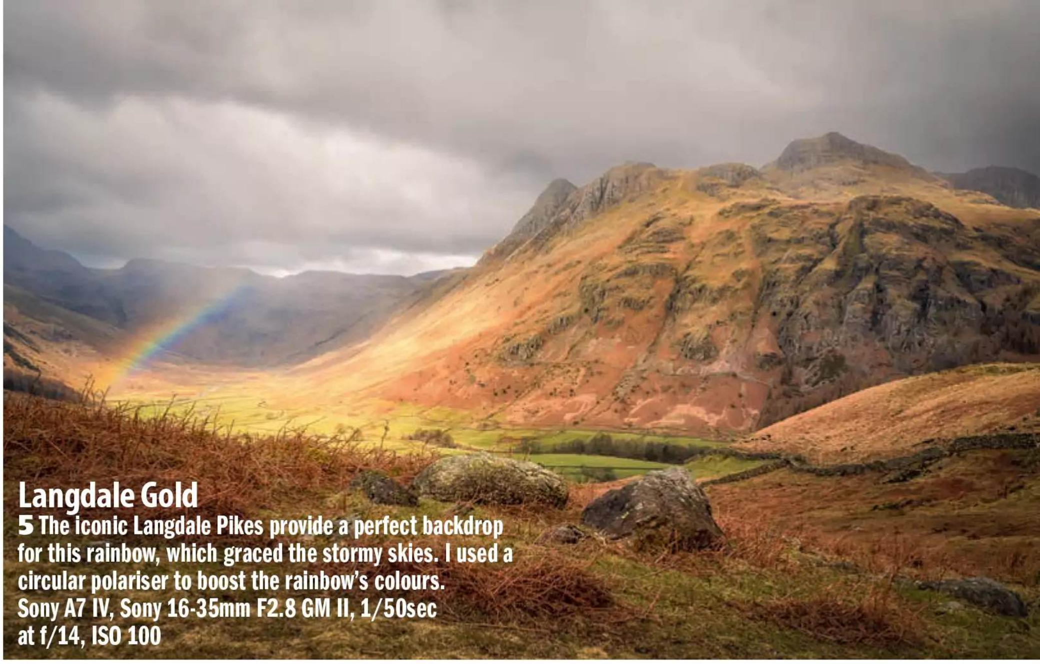
9

Blea Tarn Perspective

7 **Blea Tarn is a popular location, and it is easy to see why when you visit this stunning location in Langdale. Getting low and using my wideangle lens enabled me to frame this eye-catching set of boulders with the Langdale Pikes in the background.**
Sony A7 IV, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II, 20sec at f/16, ISO 50







Langdale Gold

5 The iconic Langdale Pikes provide a perfect backdrop for this rainbow, which graced the stormy skies. I used a circular polariser to boost the rainbow's colours.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II, 1/50sec at f/14, ISO 100

Blea Tarn Tranquillity

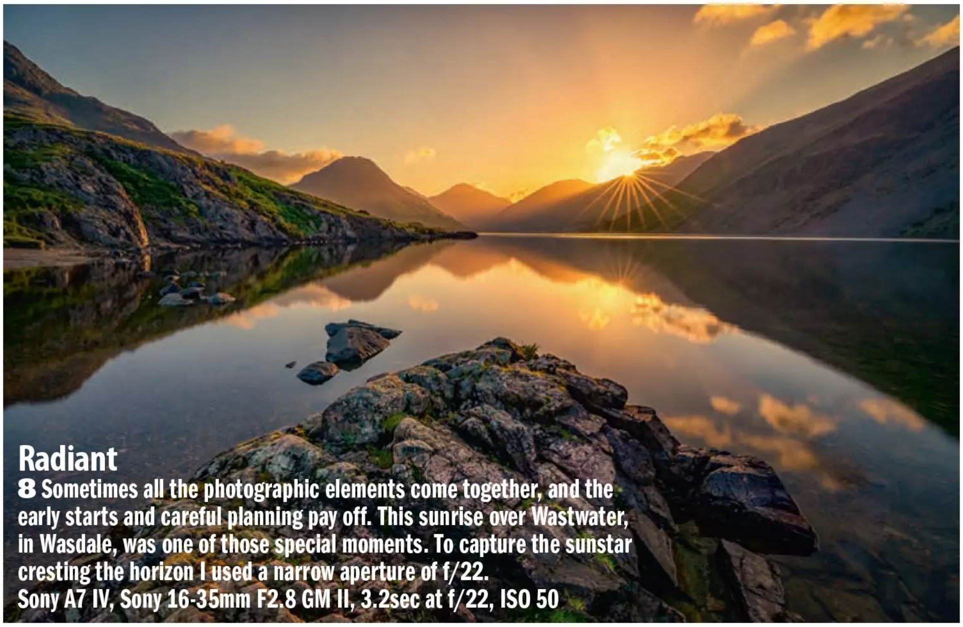
4 A beautiful morning at Blea Tarn in Langdale with the mist dancing across the water and sunrise lighting up the Langdale Pikes. The reflections were near-perfect and the tranquillity was only interrupted by the enchanting call of a very vocal cuckoo echoing around the tarn.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 24-105mm F4 G, 5sec at f/14, ISO 100

Warnscale Bothy

6 For me, the view from Warnscale Bothy to Buttermere and Crummock Water is one of the finest in the Lake District. After four years of trying, I finally captured the image I envisaged, with the setting sun casting a perfect golden glow on the bothy.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II, 1/30sec at f/22, ISO 100

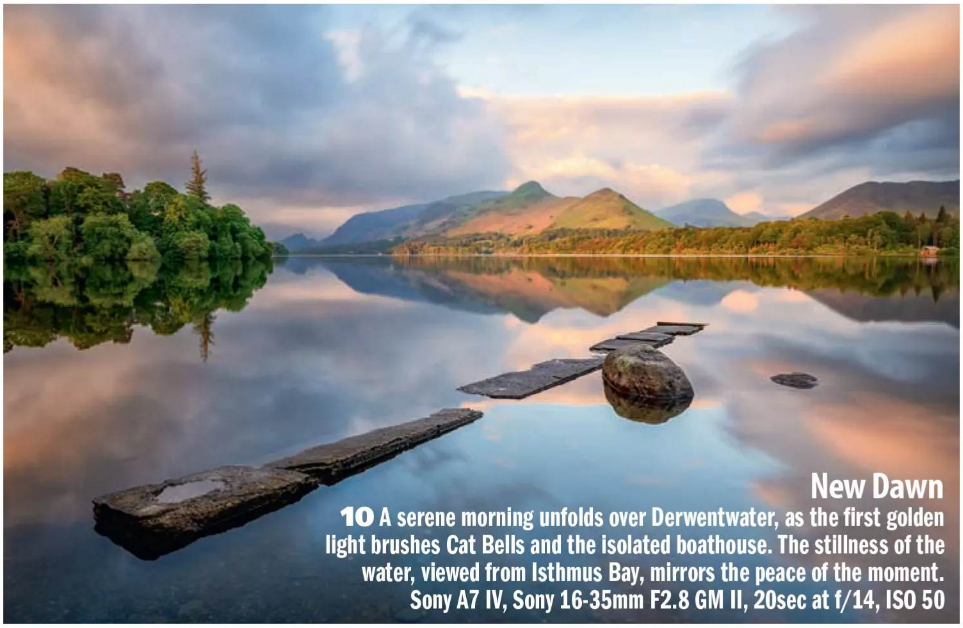
Living On The Edge

9 Blencathra is one of my favourite Lakeland mountains and is a great place to capture the sunrise. I had this image from Sharp Edge in my mind for a while, and it finally came together on this April morning in 2025. I used the Bluetooth setting on my camera to shoot this image remotely.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 14mm F1.8 GM, 1/200sec at f/16, ISO 100



Radiant

8 Sometimes all the photographic elements come together, and the early starts and careful planning pay off. This sunrise over Wastwater, in Wasdale, was one of those special moments. To capture the sunstar cresting the horizon I used a narrow aperture of f/22.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II, 3.2sec at f/22, ISO 50



New Dawn

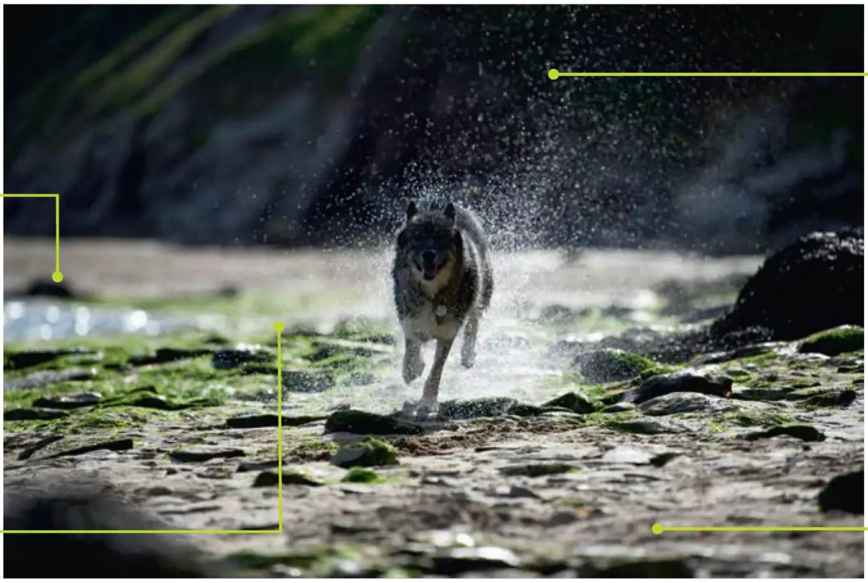
10 A serene morning unfolds over Derwentwater, as the first golden light brushes Cat Bells and the isolated boathouse. The stillness of the water, viewed from Isthmus Bay, mirrors the peace of the moment.
Sony A7 IV, Sony 16-35mm F2.8 GM II, 20sec at f/14, ISO 50

Behind the print

Expert dog photographer **Kingsley Singleton** shows how to edit this back-lit shot so it's ready for printing

Kingsley Singleton

Kingsley is a photographer, tutor, and writer with decades of experience in shooting technique and editing. As well as shooting landscapes and portraits he's a professional dog photographer, based in Cumbria's beautiful Eden Valley. Follow his dog photography at **Instagram @eden.valley.dogs**



1 Shot in raw, this image has an exposure of 1/3200sec at f/3.5, ISO 200

2 The shutter speed freezes the back-lit spray, something I wanted to accentuate

3 A vertical crop suits the action and I chose a 4:5 format to suit regular print sizes

4 The Shadows and Exposure slider help to create more balanced lighting

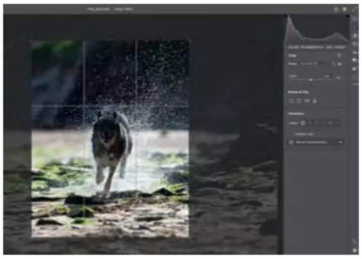
Whatever the subject, I love backlighting. Our vision is instinctively drawn to the light, so backlit shots are always eye-catching. And when there's water and fur involved it's even better. Particularly for action and portrait images of dogs, with the sun behind, definition on the subject increases, picking them out from the background and adding a pleasing glow.

But along with the benefits come a few challenges. For one thing, unless exposure compensation or some kind of reflector is used, the camera will probably underexpose to some degree, forcing the subject into shadow. Alternatively, you may lose the background to overexposure.

Fortunately, most modern cameras have excellent dynamic range in their raw files – the Nikon D850 I was using in this case being no exception – and that means you can balance exposure with ease. However, you need to do so carefully or you can end up with a very flat and artificial-looking image in the manner of bad HDR. Here's how I worked this image up.

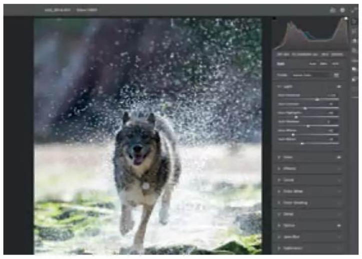
ALL PICTURES © KINGSLEY SINGLETON

PREPARING FOR PRINTING



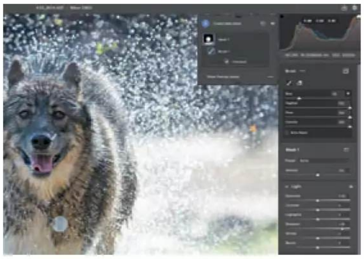
1 Crop to vertical format

In Camera Raw, hit C to open the cropping options, and change the Preset to your desired ratio. Next, use Rotate Aspect Ratio (X) to turn through 90°. With Constrain Aspect Ratio selected, you can then adjust the corner handles to crop. Hit Return to apply.



2 Balance the exposure

To lighten the underexposed image, in the Edit tab (E) under Light, I set Exposure to +1.50. This may blow out the brightest areas; to compensate, drag the Highlights and Whites sliders left. I set Contrast to -10. Ensure some black remains by moving the Blacks slider left.



3 Apply fill light locally

Press K to activate the Adjustment Brush, then set the Brush's Feather to give it a soft edge. Next push the Shadows slider to the right and play the brush over the areas you want to lighten. Use a new brush for any other parts you want to lighten.

Kingsley's top tips

Tips for editing your images

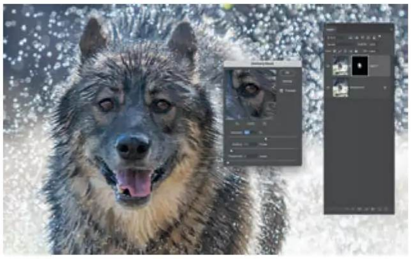
1 Crop at the start
Cropping should always be your first step, so you're not making exposure decisions about areas of the image that will be ultimately removed. Working in raw, you'll always have the original to return to if needed.

2 Think about frame sizes
Prints can be made in any aspect, but frames less so. If planning to frame a print, it makes sense to crop it into the aspect you're intending to use.

3 Use your previews
If your monitor isn't well calibrated, images can look lighter or darker than they really are. Try holding Alt as you move the sliders like Exposure or Blacks, to see when they start clipping, and always pay attention to the histogram.

4 Stay in 16-bit
After leaving Camera Raw or Lightroom and doing further work in Photoshop, ensure you're working in 16-bit mode where you'll get the greatest quality in colour and tone. Only save to 8-bit at the last stage.

5 Pay attention to details
Printing is about as final as you can get and there's no fixing mistakes afterwards. Always apply automatic lens corrections as you process, and double-check the image for dust and distractions before sending to print.



4 Sharpen the details

Hit Open to push the image into Photoshop then Ctrl+J to duplicate the layer. On the new layer, go to Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask, set the Amount and hit OK. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Hide All and use the Brush tool to paint white over areas you want to be sharpened.

WhiteWall recommends

'For this dynamic photograph capturing a dog in mid-motion, I recommend our Fine Art Pigment Print under Acrylic Glass, presented in our Floater Frame Basel.

'The combination of glossy acrylic glass and the subtle depth of the frame enhance the vivid energy of the image – every droplet of water and strand of fur comes to life with remarkable clarity. The Maple White frame profile adds a refined, natural touch that harmonizes beautifully with the bright tones and the outdoor setting.'

Jan-Ole Schmidt, Product Manager, WhiteWall.com

Mobil 1 VICTORY LANE
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DAYTONA
ROLEX 24
PORSCHE
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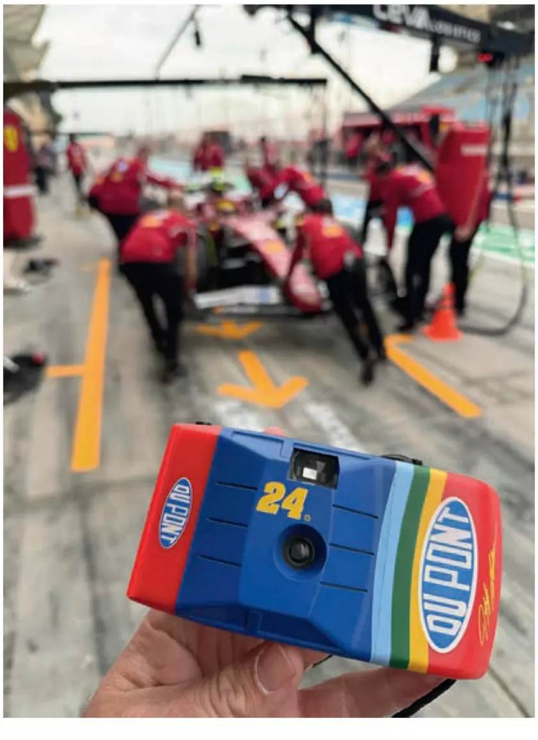


ALL PICTURES © JAMEY PRICE

Plastic fantastic

When motorsport and automotive photographer Jamey Price first saw a 1990s NASCAR-branded plastic film camera on another photographer's social media feed, he knew he had to have one. **Peter Dench** finds out more

These cameras were never made to take outstanding photos,' laughs Jamey Price. 'They were inexpensive, poorly made, and plastic. The winders break. The shutter stops working. One froze to death in below-zero temperatures in Canada. But they also capture magic.'

It's perhaps not what you expect to hear from a Motorsport Photographer of the Year (2019) who's used to shooting with precision-engineered digital gear and lenses as long as a forearm. Armed with this unlikely tool, a cheap reloadable camera sold at NASCAR races over 25 years ago, Price decided to document an entire year of motorsport with it. The result is his new photobook, *Racing Unfiltered*, a gloriously imperfect, film-grain love letter to racing's people and places.

Before becoming a motorsport photographer, Jamey Price spent seven years as a National Hunt jockey. After graduating from a small liberal arts college in Kentucky, he moved to England to pursue a career in horse racing. 'I didn't have a girlfriend or a job lined up, so I decided to take a shot at it,' he recalls. Based near the market town, Leyburn, he rode out for various trainers, spending time across North Yorkshire, the Cotswolds near Cheltenham, and even a month in Ireland. 'I loved being out in the middle of nowhere. I spent zero time in London,' he says. Though on the taller side for a jockey, Price, now 38, relished the experience: 'It was a fun time in my life. I loved it. That was several lifetimes ago. From horses to horsepower, as I like to say.'

A year on plastic

From the 24 Hours of Le Mans to Formula 1, IMSA, Monterey Car Week and beyond, Price carried one of these toy-like cameras everywhere. 'Originally, I just wanted to post a few fun film photos on Instagram,' he says. 'I'd never shot film for any of my work. But people kept asking, what are you doing with all these pictures? Eventually, I realised they were a way to remember my year, my favourite memories of racing, seen differently.'

As a professional motorsport photographer, producing pin-sharp digital work for manufacturers, sponsors and drivers, this, he says, was the opposite: 'They're not quality pictures. They're not what I deliver to clients. They're just little moments that feel real.'

He bought around 15 cameras and breaking about half. Each is decorated with a vintage NASCAR hero including Jeff Gordon, Rusty Wallace and the man with the must-have moustache, Dale Earnhardt Sr.

Price learned to coax each brittle plastic camera through a few rolls before it inevitably died. 'They're not disposable, you can reload them,' he explains. 'That's the only reason this project was possible.'

With a fixed lens somewhere between 40 and 50mm and no manual control, each camera is a lottery. 'There are no settings, no flash. You can't change a thing. The only control is what film you load and where you stand,' Price stresses. 'They have a fairly slow shutter speed, so if you're not holding it perfectly still, it's soft but that softness can work to your advantage. It's like a natural pan.'

Clockwise from top left: Porsche Penske GTP, 2025

Ferrari. Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, 2024

Felipe Albuquerque, Wayne Taylor Racing GTP. Rolex 24 at Daytona, 2025

One of Price's plastic cameras

Early on, he realised that

trackside action wasn't the camera's strength. 'The cars are just too far away. Where it really excels is in the paddock, when crews are prepping the cars, or in the pit lane. That's where the intimacy comes through.' Learning the quirks became part of the fun. 'You don't even know if you've taken a picture. The shutter's sticky, you have to really push it. But that's part of the charm.'

Unplanned moments

Among the hundreds of frames he shot, one stands out. 'There's a shot of Fred Vasseur, the Ferrari Formula One team principal, making a funny gesture in pit lane. It's perfectly sharp and on that little film camera! I'm almost prouder of that than anything I shot digitally.'

Another favourite came during the Miami Grand Prix, when Daniel Ricciardo spotted Price's Dale Earnhardt–themed camera. 'He said, wow, that's cool. He climbed out of the car to have a look. We bonded over it, two people who love photography, sharing a moment in the middle of Formula One.'

These fleeting, unposed, often imperfect moments capture the human side of a sport usually dominated by precision and polish.

Message behind the mess

Though *Racing Unfiltered* began as a personal project, there's an underlying philosophy where Price jabs an elbow in the ribs of the racing establishment and to show it's not about the gear. 'You don't need a £10,000 camera to make a great photo,' admits Price.

As someone who shoots with the latest high-end digital bodies, Price knows how seductive technology can be. 'Some of the best racing pictures ever made weren't shot in the last 20 years with crazy autofocus systems. They were made with skill, timing and light. That still matters more than megapixels.'

After years of near-constant travel, around 28 to 30 weeks a year on the road, the project also reconnected him with photography's playful side. 'It's a reminder to have fun. Pick up a camera, any camera and just shoot.'

Nuts and bolts

Over 12 months, Price ran approximately 80 to 100 rolls of film through the cameras, covering 28 events. 'Fuji 400 has worked best,' he says. 'It's inexpensive and reliable. I've tried Portra 800 and Cinestill 800T for night races, but you can't tell a huge difference; the camera's the limiting factor, not the film.'

He gets the negatives processed at

Top right: Fernando Alonso, Aston Martin F1. Miami Grand Prix, 2024

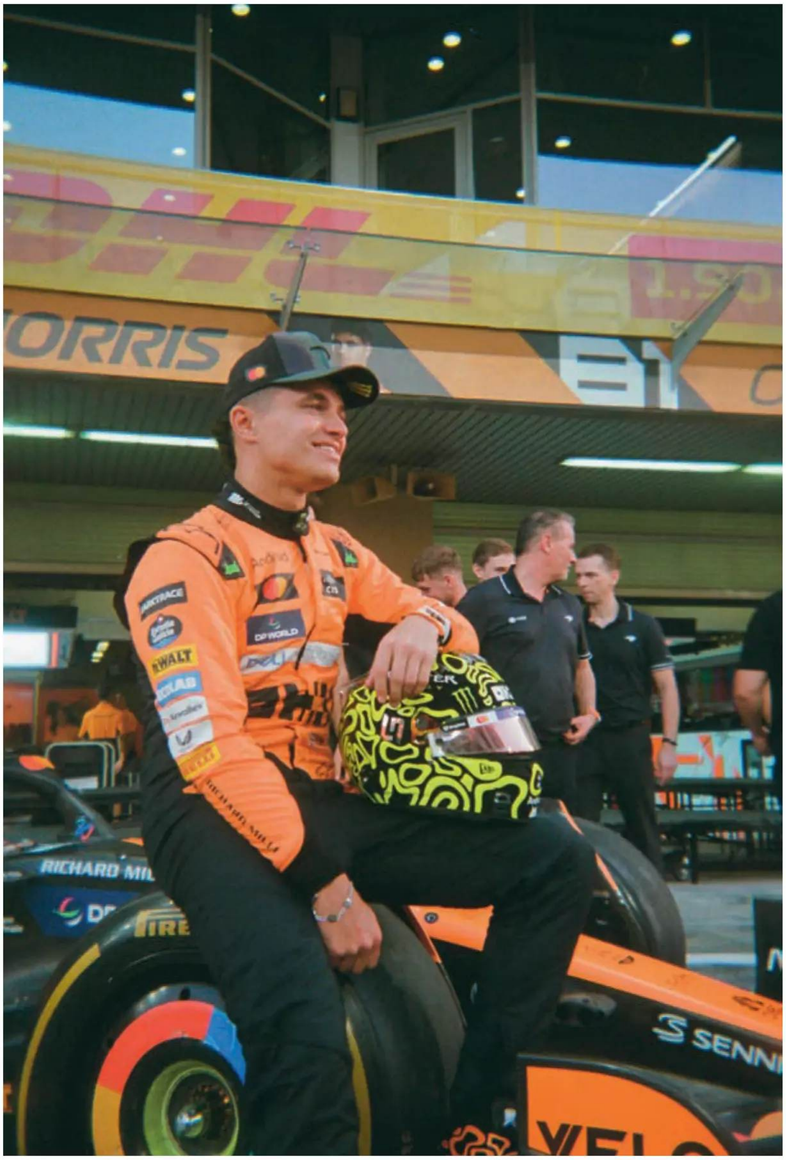
Middle right: Daniel Ricciardo, Visa Cash App RB. Miami Grand Prix, 2024

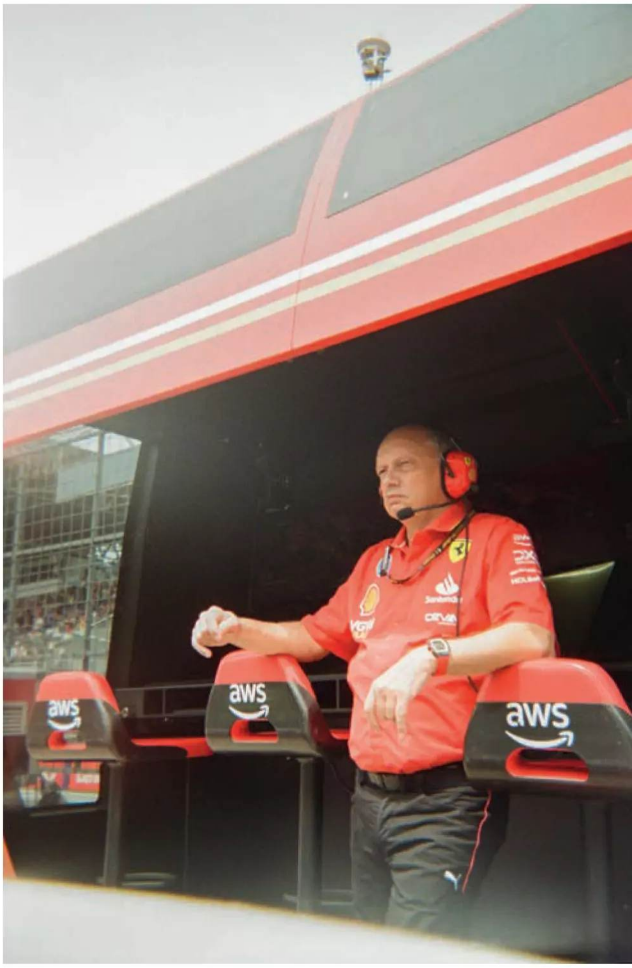
Middle left: F1 Las Vegas welcome sign 2024

Bottom right: Max Verstappen, Red Bull Racing. F1. Miami Grand Prix, 2024

Below: Fred Vasseur, team principal, Scuderia Ferrari. São Paulo Grand Prix, 2024

Below left: Lando Norris, McLaren F1 Abu Dhabi, 2024





WELCOME
TO Las Vegas
FORMULA 1

Biggs Camera, a film lab in his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina. 'Sometimes I drop them off Monday morning and have the scans back that afternoon. They've been amazing.'

For all its spontaneity, the book came together smoothly. 'I wasn't approached for it, people just kept asking what I was doing with the pictures. So I decided to make something tangible. It's not an iconic-moment type of book, it's my year, unfiltered.'

Even brands known for their strict image control, such as Ferrari, didn't object. 'There's been no pushback at all,' he says. 'It's such a low-fi look that it's not even on their radar.'

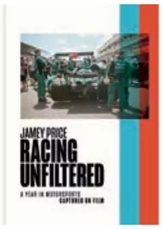
Film, fun and freedom

Racing Unfiltered is more than nostalgia. It's a statement, a counterpoint to the perfectionism of modern digital photography and the hyper-controlled world of motorsport media. The resulting images, grainy and unpredictable, feel closer to what being there actually looks like: sweaty, noisy, human.

'It's cost money, the film, the developing, but it's been worth it,' says Price. 'A few of the reels I posted on Instagram went viral. People seem to connect with the imperfection.' Not everyone; quite a few people on social media angrily told Price that it's both a waste of film and his unique access to use these cameras and their poor quality on such high-end subjects, and he should get a proper film camera.

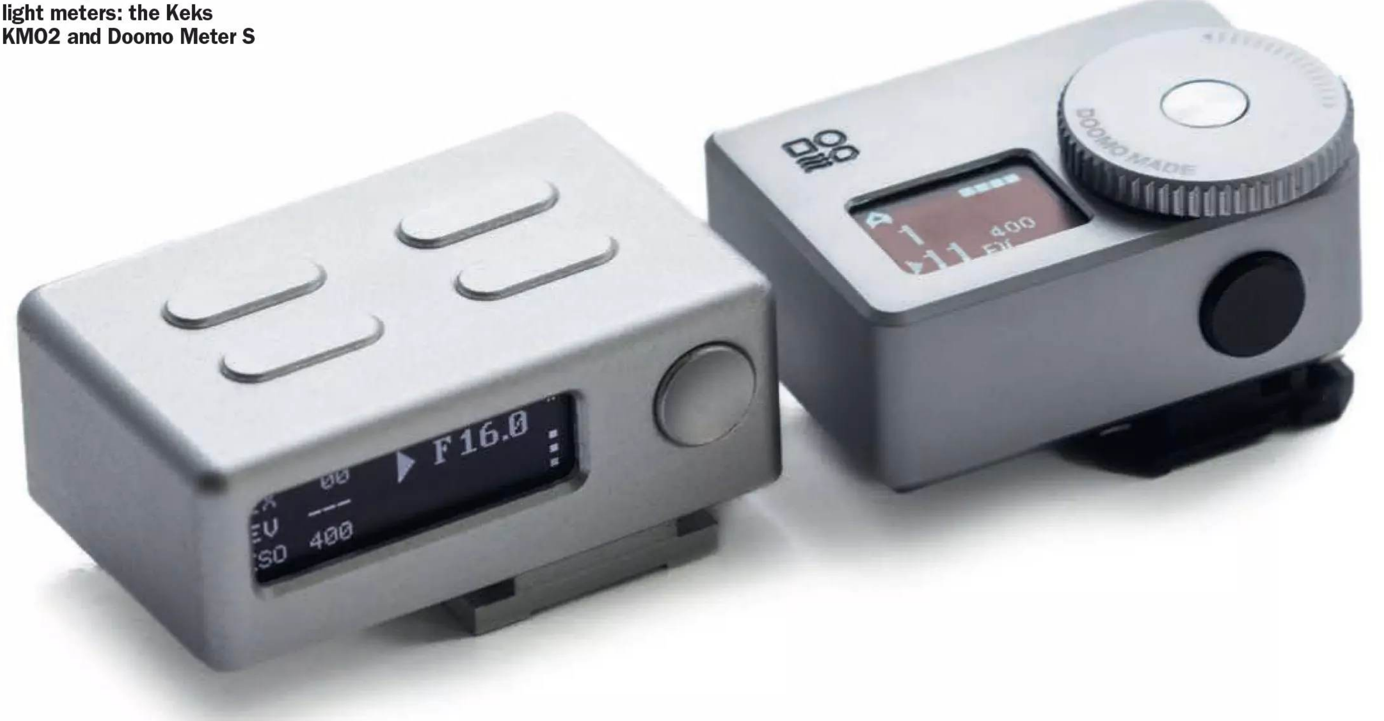
During the last race for 2024, in typical fashion with these cameras, Price had three rolls that worked. And one full roll that didn't load properly and was blank. 'It sucks. Definitely some fun images that are gone forever. But such is film life. I don't know if I'll do a second one,' he grins, 'but I haven't stopped. It's still fun.'

To see more visit Price's Instagram @jameypricephoto



Racing Unfiltered by Jamey Price is available now through Trope Publishing Co. RRP £46.99, Hardback, 160pages, ISBN: 9781951963514

Two compact on-camera light meters: the Keks KM02 and Doomo Meter S

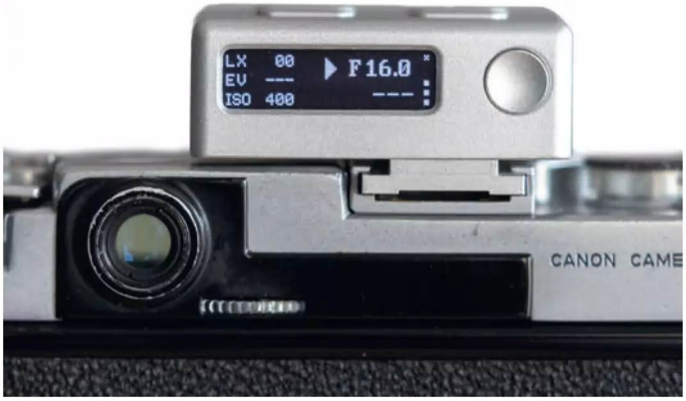


Mini meters

Need a lightmeter for your classic film camera? **David Clapp** tries out two small, stylish options

After venturing back into a world of large-format photography ten years ago, I had to step back and learn how to use a light meter with accuracy. I went through a few vintage spot meters before I settled on a Sekonic D-758, a modern and rather complex tool with a huge array of functions and shortcuts to memorise.

Fast forward ten years, and just three out of the nine film cameras that I own have a built-in light meter. One of those was sold to me as 'working' from a seller in Japan and you guessed it, it doesn't work.



There's a detailed information display on the back of the Keks KM02

For the modern digital photographer stepping back in time on a first nostalgic journey, this disarming predicament can feel rather uncomfortable. A separate light meter means more clobber and a creative disconnect from the romance of that first 'decisive moment'. Something smaller and simpler is needed. Now thanks to modern battery technology, clever aluminium machining and circuit boards the size of your thumbnail, our dreams have come true.

Keep it simple

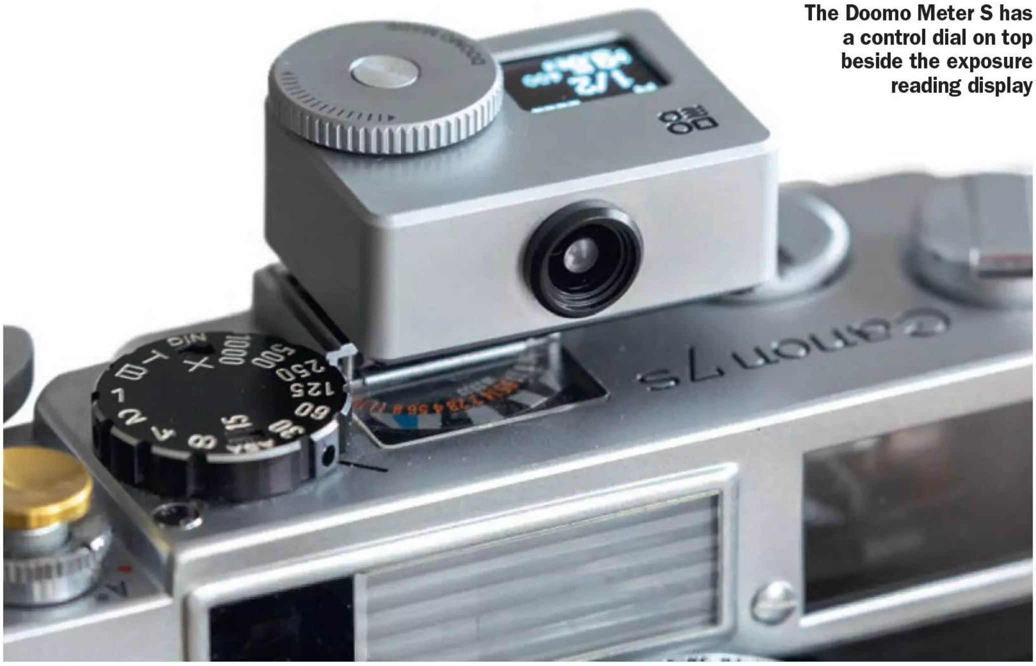
So what functions could we do with? Aperture priority please, that's literally all I need. But let's get a few things straight. These meters like the Keks KM02 and Doomo Meter S that I primarily use on my 35mm Canon rangefinders (and even a Mamiya 645 1000s) are straightforward and really look the part.

The Keks KM02 measures roughly 42x27x15mm and the Doomo Meter S is similar in footprint, its anodised aluminium body matching the industrial lines of classic rangefinders. Both use bright OLED readouts that remain visible in daylight. This design makes them ideal companions for Leica Ms, Canon P-series (or the Canon 7s / VT Deluxe in my case) and especially the popular Nikon F cameras. The main draw is that they add functionality without disturbing the profile of the camera. I like to think this extra brain was in the post from design stage – an intentional vintage firmware update, shall we say.

The Keks' 30-degree metering angle corresponds to a normal 50mm lens on full frame. It employs the VEML7700 16-bit sensor, allowing exposure accuracy even under strongly backlit or mixed-light conditions. It operates across film speeds of ISO 50-102,400, apertures of f/1 to f/128, and shutter speeds from 1/8000sec to 30 seconds, all selectable via single- or continuous-metering modes.

Doomo's OLED meter covers the same exposure span (EV 1-22 approx.) offering real-time metering that instantly updates as you pan the camera. It's a real joy and you feel ready to shoot.

I tested all of them against my Nikon F2AS with a DP12 meter, as well as a Gossen Lunasix F. The Doomo / Keks and the Nikon gave consistent accuracy and the Gossen I now realise is measuring everything one stop under. I now need to investigate why this is.



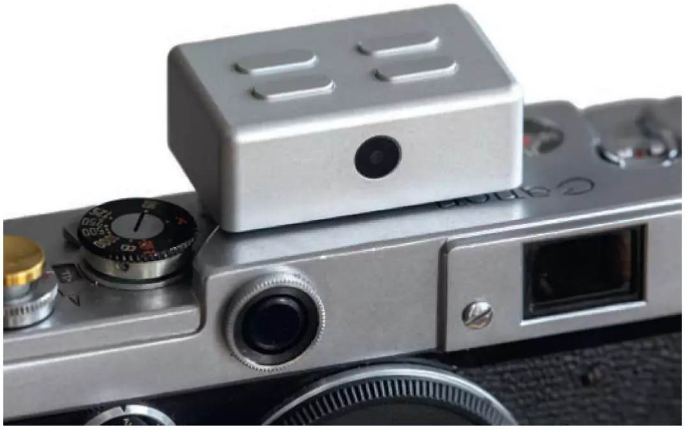
The Doomo Meter S has a control dial on top beside the exposure reading display

Ease of use

For digital photographers transitioning to film, usability is paramount. Both meters adopt minimalist interfaces and the design is thoroughly well thought out. The Doomo Meter S has one dial and a single button: set your film's ISO, choose an exposure mode, press to sample or lock an EV reading. Double press and switch between aperture or shutter priority. Its design reduces the learning curve yet demands a little muscle memory to recall which press-and-hold combination is needed. The Keks DM02 introduces two tactile buttons at the top, one for function, another for metering, which allows faster recall once memorised. Both are easy to use once the path has been walked a few times.

Each meter's OLED is a delight. The displays are small and well defined but under my testing this summer, the screens can appear a little faint until shaded by my hand. The Keks screen is facing the eyes, the Doomo is on the top, which I personally think makes the Keks faster to use. The Doomo's dial feels smooth but lacks detents, which is understandable, but this means it's not so easy to be precise.

Internally, both devices draw power from a tiny built-in lithium-ion cell (I am amazed at how these are built) and both come with the convenience of USB-C charging. This morning it took just 20 minutes to charge from 10 to 100% using a power bank. From some online research, the Keks lasts around 21 hours of active metering per charge and the Doomo can go weeks between top-ups due to low idle consumption. Taking that first shot only to find your mercury cell meter batteries are flat is now a thing of the past, as most of us carry portable power these days. Isn't it amazing how far we have come?



Four unmarked buttons on top control the KM02's functions

Practical training

Having a meter like this, that you can literally lose in your jeans pocket, means you can use it as a metering training aid. Set it up and walk around trying to guess the shutter speed. It's a fun game that for some strange reason I just can't get my wife Rachel to play.

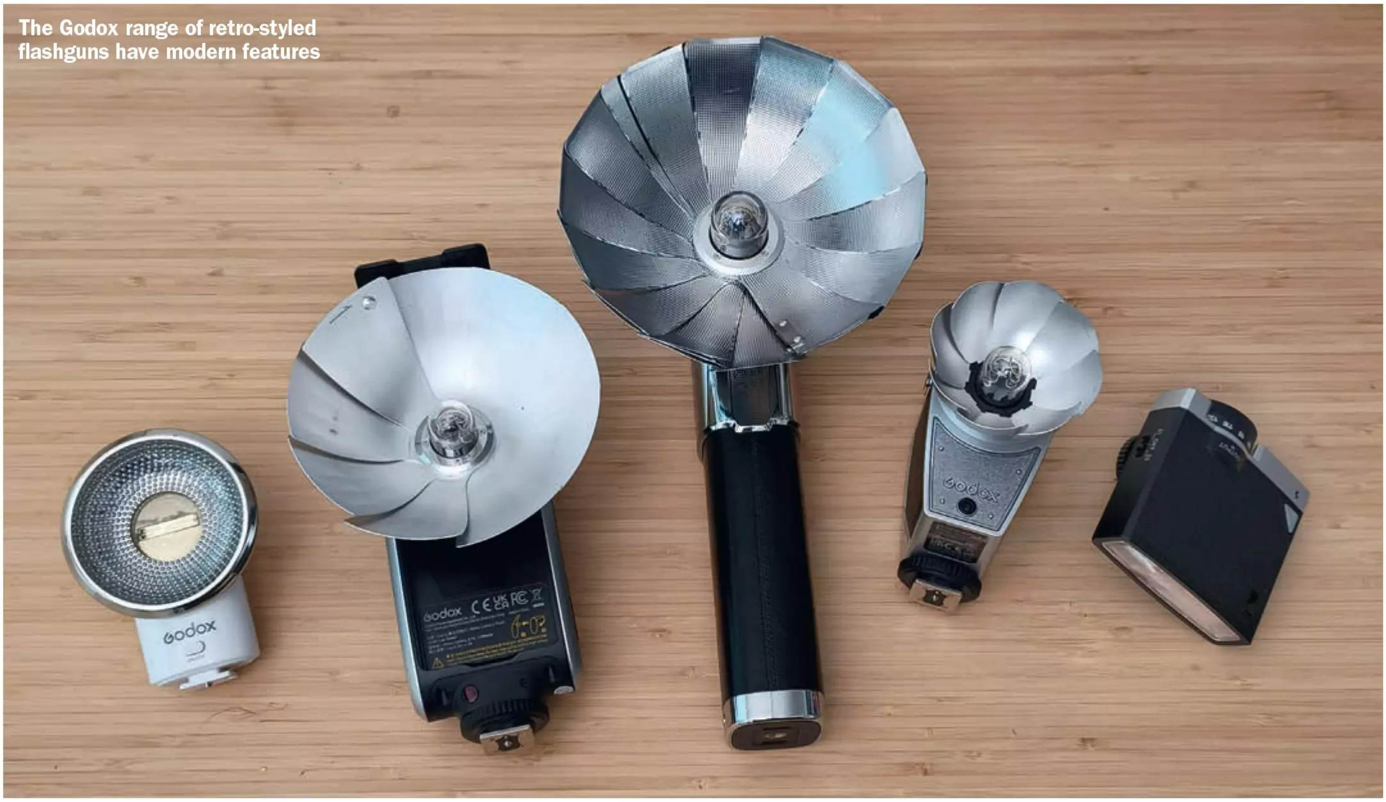
The great thing about these tiny portable meters is that you can migrate them to any system you like, which means you're encouraged to dig out dad's dusty camera and take it for a Sunday drive. No need to pack yet another case, or an inaccurate vintage leather-cased relic and incident dome, with dangling cables and dubious results.

Final thoughts

These convenient and accurate tools are not designed to compete with a 1° accurate spot meter like the Sekonic I mentioned. They are functional and dare I say it necessary accessories for the modern film enthusiast, especially the 35mm photographer with a 35mm or 50mm prime. They align with a subtle aesthetics when mounted on top of a mechanical classic. Both are small enough to lose (so watch out for that), so I have left both in place on my 1950s Canon rangefinders for now.

The price is far less than many other modern digital meters (around £100 to £130 respectively) and also competes with a second-hand vintage meter like the Gossen, which as I found out may be less reliable. Although they initially appear rather small, the Keks or the Doomo are tactile, engaging and a relief to use.

Whether you're a seasoned film photographer or a digital photographer, you'll appreciate how our wonderful world of modern technology is supporting classic cameras for generations to come. AP


The Godox range of retro-styled flashguns have modern features

Light fantastic

There are lots of retro cameras but retro flashguns? **Nigel Atherton** tries out the Godox Lux range

Nigel with the five Godox Lux flashes, which he used at Notting Hill Carnival

Godox has a range of retro-styled flashguns designed to look the part with classic film cameras, which means they're also a great match with modern retro digital cameras such as the Fujifilm X series and the Nikon Zfc. I borrowed all five of them from their UK distributor, Essential Photo & Video, and tried them out with a variety of both film and digital cameras, including taking them to Notting Hill Carnival. They never failed to turn heads and get attention from photographers and curious members of the public asking about them.

All but one of Lux range feature an old-style bare flash-bulb design and fanned metal dish reflector, but they're brought bang up to date with modern features such as Lithium Ion batteries with direct USB-C charging, slave modes and – in the case of one of them – a touchscreen LCD panel and TTL metering. And of course that flashbulb is no longer single use, and you won't burn your fingers replacing it!

Four out of the five models are mounted on the camera and triggered either via the hot-shoe, or, via a PC sync cord for cameras that don't have one. The guide number varies for each flashgun, and exposure on most of them must be either set manually, with output generally stepped from full power down to 1/64th power, or using the auto mode, with the camera set to f/2.8 at ISO 100 (or f/5.6 at ISO 400 etc). Only the Lux Master is dedicated, with the optional TTL trigger.

Enjoyable

The flashguns were huge fun to use. It has been a long time since I had to calculate flash exposure settings from a dial on the back, but I enjoyed the engagement with the process that most modern TTL flash lacks. And I really enjoyed the results that I got from them, whether using them outdoors as a fill light, to brighten faces and add catchlights (the best use for flashguns, in my opinion) or indoor social situations when it became the main light source.

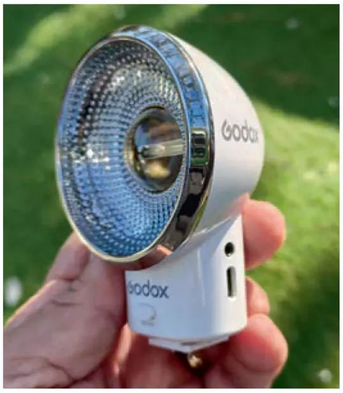
Even then I tried to bump up the ISO and slow down the shutter speed to capture as much of the ambient light as possible, because I dislike the rabbit-in-the-headlights look of default indoor flash, with washed-out faces and deep black backgrounds.

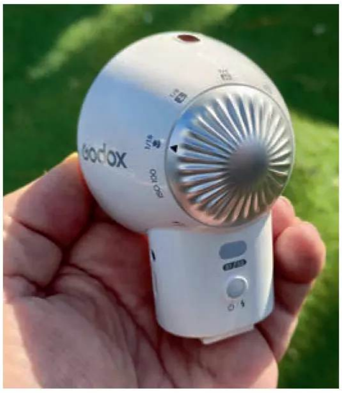
Godox Lux Elf

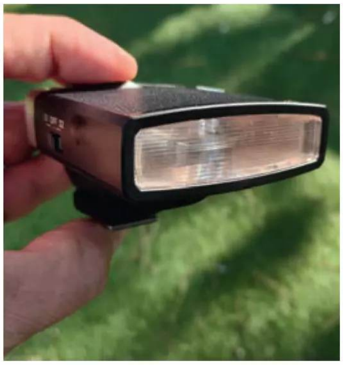
● £47

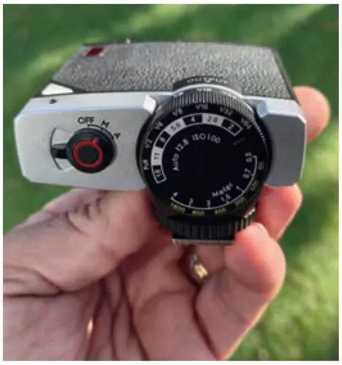
The smallest and least powerful flashgun of the series, the Elf has a guide number of just six, but that's still enough to provide a pleasant fill for portrait subjects up to a couple of metres away. Unlike its bigger siblings the reflector is fixed but since the Elf is small enough to fit in a trouser pocket it doesn't need to be retractable. It still has room for a USB charging port, 2.5mm sync cord input and a slave mode switch.

Unlike the black and silver of the other models the Elf only comes in white, but this made it an excellent pairing with my white Pen E-P1, Olympus's first Micro Four Thirds camera, from 2009, which was itself based on the Pen half-frame 35mm camera of 1959. The two looked so good together that it almost looked like the Elf was designed specifically for it. It's certainly fair to say that the Elf's diminutive size makes it a good match with smaller cameras, whatever their colour.









Godox Lux Junior

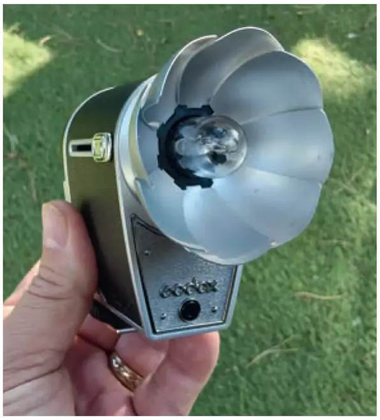
● £75

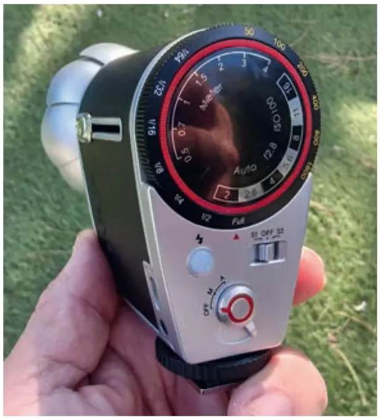
The Lux Junior looks quite different to the others in being the only one that doesn't have a circular reflector dish design. Instead it has a more traditional rectangular flash tube, though the silver and black leatherette finish still gives it a retro look. It's also the only model in the range that uses two AAA batteries instead of a rechargeable Lithium Ion. Though less convenient, the advantage is you can replace the batteries when they expire, so you can keep shooting. The rectangular shape of the flash also means you get less fall-off into the corners of your image than you do with its circular siblings. It's only a subtle difference and probably only relevant if you're photographing groups, with people at the edges of the frame. The lack of a dish also makes it a more robust choice since there are no protruding reflector blades that could get knocked or broken. Like the rest of the range, it can be triggered via a hotshoe, PC sync cord or used as a slave.

Godox Lux Cadet

● £92

The Cadet is arguably the cutest of the range, thanks to its metal petal dish reflector that retracts into the body of the flash when not in use, and slides back out in a second when needed. The compact, teardrop-shaped body, with its textured silver and black leatherette finish, looks wonderfully retro, an appearance which is enhanced ten-fold when you slide out the dish. Like the rest of the range it can be used in Auto or Manual modes and there is a large dial on the back which can adjust the manual output down to 1/64th power. Ports for USB-C charging and PC sync cord connection are accompanied by a slave switch. The modest guide number of 10 is still powerful enough for most close-range portraiture, though the small circular dish produces a noticeable hot-spot when used with lenses wider than 28mm equivalent. But this corner vignetting is generally not an issue for the kinds of pictures you'll take with it and aesthetically could even be considered a positive.



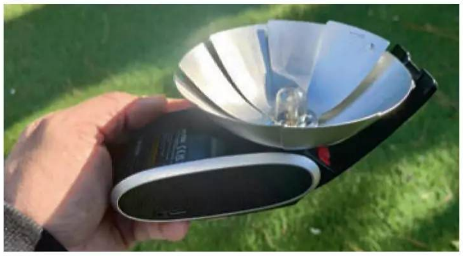


Godox Lux Senior

● £130

Like the Cadet, the larger Senior features a petal style metal dish reflector which retracts into the body of the flashgun when not in use, but it's a much larger reflector, so it doesn't pop out in the same way. Instead, the petal segments are hidden beneath a hinged cover. Opening the cover reveals the petals stacked one on top of the other. To use it, you fan the petals into a full 360 degree circle, then push a button to pop out the bulb. To fold it away again you just do the same in reverse. This means it takes a couple of seconds longer to be ready for use, but the larger reflector gives you a slightly bigger, softer spread of light than the Cadet, and the Guide number of 14 offers 40% more power. You do need to take a little more care with the dish in crowded spaces (like carnival) where it can get easily knocked, though this happened multiple times at carnival without suffering any ill-effects, so it's quite robust.

The genius of the design, however, means that when folded up the Senior takes up hardly any more space in a bag or pocket than the Cadet does. As with the rest of the range there are ports for USB-C charging, and a sync cable, a slave switch, and a large dial on the back for exposure control and calculation. The Senior also comes in a choice of five other colours, including red, green, pink and white, besides the traditional black and silver.



Godox Lux Master

● £235

The Lux Master is a major step up in specification from the rest of the range. It is a hand-held, rather than a hot-shoe mounted flash that can be attached to the camera via the supplied bracket and a PC sync cable, or used off-camera. In addition to the Auto and Manual modes of the rest of the range, the Master additionally offers wireless TTL flash when used with a compatible trigger. Manual flash can be set from full power down to 1/256th power in 1/10th stop increments. Instead of a dial, controls are accessed by a small, round touchscreen LCD display and/or a small rotating control ring if you prefer.

The petal dish reflector fans open and closed in the same way as on the Senior, though of course the dish is bigger. The head tilts upwards in click-stop increments up to 90 degrees, for bouncing off a ceiling, and the petal reflector can be removed altogether via a simple bayonet mount and replaced with a range of alternative modifiers, including the excellent LM-S25 pop-up octagonal softbox (which costs £22 extra).

This versatility, along with the useful Guide Number of 25, effectively turns the Lux Master into a hand-holdable off-camera studio flash, making it a great option for event, portrait and wedding photographers on location. The downside for pros is the fixed, built-in USB-C rechargeable battery which can't be replaced when you've used your 450 shots per charge, though you can of course plug in a powerbank. The long handle with smooth black leatherette grip makes it comfortable to hold whether used remotely or on a bracket, and in fact the design is much more ergonomic than a more traditionally shaped flash.

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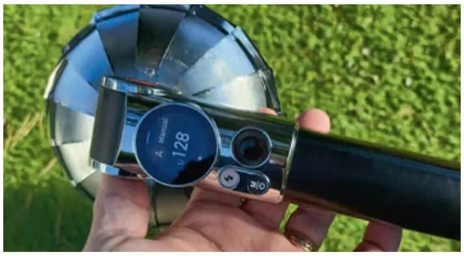

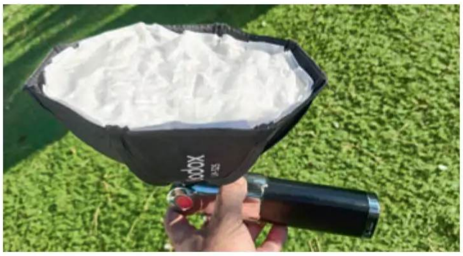

Conclusion

All five Lux flashguns look great and are fun to use. The tiny, stylish Elf is ideal for compacts and smaller cameras but as you go up the range you get more power, more flashes per charge and a bigger flash spread. The Junior is the most conventional in design but still looks good with older cameras. I have a soft spot for the Cadet. I love the size and the way the bulb and dish just slide out. The Senior is a great alternative if you want the extra power. But I must save my greatest praise for the Master, which is just superb. The retro styling looks great with my Nikon FM2, and the Fujifilm X-T5 and GFX100RF that I also used it on; but nostalgia aside this is a great flash, not just a great retro flash. The stick-shaped design takes up little space in a bag, and makes it comfortable to use on or off camera. The power is sufficient for most of my portraiture needs and the softbox add-on is the icing on the cake. I didn't try the TTL mode as I didn't have a TTL trigger but even without that very useful function I love the Lux Master enough to plan to buy one. *Point your phone camera at the QR code above to watch our full-length video on the Godox Lux range.*

Video

	 Elf	 Cadet	 Junior	 Senior	 Master
Guide No.	6	10	12	14	25
Modes	Auto, Manual	Auto, Manual	Auto, Manual	Auto, Manual	Auto, Manual, TTL, Multi
Output	1/1 to 1/16	1/1 to 1/64	1/1 to 1/16	1/1 to 1/16	1/1 to 1/128
Optical slave	S1 / S2	S1 / S2	S1 / S2	S1 / S2	S1 / S2
Dimensions	70mm x 97mm x 53mm	94mm x 50mm x 71mm	73.8mm x 50.2mm x 71.8mm	84mm x 114mm x 176mm	140mm x 260mm x 99mm
Weight	96g	171g	130g	227g	470g
Power	Lithium 350mAh 400 flashes per charge	Lithium 1700mAh 620 flashes per charge	2x AAA	Lithium 1700mAh 150 flashes per charge	Lithium 2980mAh 460 flashes per charge
Price	£47	£92	£75	£130	£235

SPECIAL OFFER! The Godox Lux range is currently on promotion but Essential Photo & Video are offering AP readers an exclusive 5% discount on top of their existing sale prices on any Godox Lux product when using the code **APLUX5** at checkout. Visit their website at ***www.essentialphoto.co.uk/collections/godox-lux-range*** to redeem your code (Note: 1 use per person)

TOP PHOTOGRAPHER Winner

Ivar Thorsen, Norway

Meet the GuruShots winners

AP showcases the very best images sent in by GuruShots users on the theme of Lighting

GuruShots, the organisers of the world's greatest photography games and communities, recently challenged its users to send in their best images on the theme of Lighting. *Amateur Photographer* is partnering with GuruShots and we are now pleased to publish the 18 highest ranked photographs by those who entered. Also, remember that you can view every single image that made it into the Top 500 at amateurphotographer.com

For more inspiring challenges to improve your photo skills and stay motivated, see **gurushots.com**

TOP PHOTO Winner

Abdelrahman Ahmed, Canada

GURU'S TOP PICK Winner

Martin Mailhot, Canada

Lynn Shelton, United States

Michael Shmidt, Israel

David Feldt, Sweden

TS Nguyen, France

John Pence, United States

Albert Yao, Hong Kong

Jennifer Schexnaydre, United States

Nate Riggins, United States

Nataly Gureeva, United States

Silje Akselberg Saetre, Norway

Xan White, Switzerland

Eugene McQuillan, United States

Enrique, Mexico

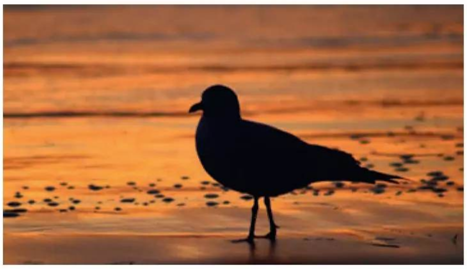
Photo Mom, United States

Donna Dunham, United States

Cast your vote in the Amateur Photographer Readers' Choice Awards!

The Amateur Photographer Readers' Choice Awards are here! Have you been really impressed by a new camera, lens or accessory in the past 12 months? Or a camera retailer, exhibition, book or photography vlogger? Now's your chance to share your love via this easy online form.

The deadline for voting is 11:59pm GMT on 31st December 2025. The winners of this public vote will be honoured at our glittering awards ceremony in London on Thursday, 26th February 2026.

Have your say on the following AP Readers' Choice Awards:

- Good Service Awards (Your favourite retailer or service provider)
- Camera of the Year
- Lens of the Year
- Accessory of the Year
- Photo Community of the Year
- Content Creator of the Year
- Photography Event/Workshop Provider

Which camera has most impressed you this year? Have you bought and used a new lens, or a game-changing accessory this year, and want to let others know how good it is?

Have you attended a great photography event in 2025? Tell us about it. Which YouTubers and content creators have inspired and entertained you the most? Finally, are you part of a photography community that has helped, encouraged and inspired you? Show your support for them with a vote in our awards.

Simply point your phone's camera at this QR code to vote, or visit: bit.ly/apreaderchoice

Buying Guide

110 cameras listed & rated

Our comprehensive listing of key camera specifications

Cameras

Cameras come in three types: DSLRs with optical viewfinders, mirrorless models with electronic viewing, and compact cameras with non-interchangeable lenses

Controls

Entry-level cameras tend to have simple, easy-to-understand controls, while more expensive models add lots of buttons and dials to give quick access to settings.

Viewfinder

The biggest difference between DSLRs and mirrorless cameras is that the latter use electronic, rather than optical viewfinders. Some advanced compact cameras also have built-in electronic viewfinders to complement their rear LCD screens.

Compact cameras

These range from small, pocketable models to large bridge-type cameras with long zoom lenses and SLR-style designs. In this guide, we're only including those with relatively large sensors for high image quality, raw format recording and manual controls.

Handgrip

DSLRs traditionally have relatively large handgrips, while many mirrorless models have much smaller grips to keep the size down. However, some can accept accessory grips to improve handling with larger lenses.

Lens mount

Each camera brand uses its own lens mount, and mirrorless cameras use different lenses to DSLRs even from the same brand. However, mirrorless models can often use DSLR lenses via a mount adapter.

ALMOST all serious photographers prefer to use cameras with interchangeable lenses, as this gives the greatest degree of creative flexibility. At one time, this meant digital single-lens-reflex (DSLR) cameras, but these have now been joined by mirrorless cameras that use electronic viewfinders. The latest models are true alternatives to DSLRs, offering the same image quality and creative options. Camera manufacturers offer a range of options, from simple, relatively inexpensive beginner-friendly designs, to sophisticated professional models. In the middle of the range you'll find enthusiast cameras with more-advanced control layouts. Meanwhile the term 'compact' refers to cameras with built-in lenses, regardless of their size. Many offer excellent image quality and full manual control.

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Mirrorless cameras

										SHOOTING					SCREEN				DIMENSIONS			
NAME & MODEL	**RRP**	**SCORE**	**SUMMARY**	**SENSOR SIZE**	**RESOLUTION (MP)**	**LENS MOUNT**	**MAX ISO**	**VIDEO**	**MIC INPUT**	**AF POINTS**	**BURST MODE (FPS)**	**VIEWFINDER**	**BUILT-IN WI-FI**	**FLASH**	**SCREEN SIZE (IN)**	**ARTICULATED LCD**	**TOUCHSCREEN**	**BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)**	**WIDTH (MM)**	**HEIGHT (MM)**	**DEPTH (MM)**	**WEIGHT (G)**
Canon EOS R1	£6999	4.5★	High-speed sports and action camera built for professional photographers	FF	24.1	Canon RF	409,600	6000	·	1053	40	·	·		3.2	·	·	1330	157.6	149.5	87.3	1115
Canon EOS RP	£1400	4★	Compact and affordable but over-simplified full-frame camera	FF	26.2	Canon RF	102,400	3840	·	4779	5	·	·		3	·	·	250	132.5	85	70	485
Canon EOS R3	£5880	5★	High-speed, pro-spec flagship model that's packed full of clever technology	FF	24.1	Canon RF	204,800	6000	·	4779	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	860	150	142.6	87.2	1015
Canon EOS R5	£4200	4.5★	Remarkable 45MP powerhouse capable of internal 8K video recording	FF	45	Canon RF	102,400	8192	·	5940	12	·	·		3.2	·	·	320	135.8	97.5	88	738
Canon EOS R5 Mark II	£4499	5★	Pro-spec all-rounder offers 45MP shooting at 30fps and 8K 60p video	FF	43	Canon RF	102,400	8192	·	1053	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	630	138.5	101.2	93.5	746
Canon EOS R6 Mark II	£2780	5★	Updated model gains 24MP sensor and AI subject-recognition AF	FF	24.2	Canon RF	204,800	3840	·	4897	12	·	·		3	·	·	450	138.4	98.4	88.4	670
Canon EOS R7	£1350	4.5★	Fast APS-C RF-mount model with sophisticated autofocus from the EOS R3	APS-C	32.5	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	15	·	·		3	·	·	770	132	90.4	91.7	530
Canon EOS R8	£1700	4.5★	Lightweight full-frame camera that offers great image quality and autofocus	FF	24.2	Canon RF	204,800	3840	·	4897	6	·	·		3	·	·	220	132.5	86.1	70	461
Canon EOS R10	£900	4★	Compact, lightweight yet highly specified RF-mount APS-C mirrorless model	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	15	·	·	·	3	·	·	430	122.5	87.8	83.4	429
Canon EOS R50	£790	4★	Small entry-level APS-C model with subject detection autofocus	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	12	·	·	·	3	·	·	310	116.3	85.5	68.8	375
Canon EOS R50 V	£729		Compact video-focused model based on the R50, but with no viewfinder	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	51,200	3840	·	651	12		·	·	3	·	·	480	119.3	73.7	45.2	370
Canon EOS R100	£670	3★	Entry-level APS-C model that's designed to be a simple family camera	APS-C	24.2	Canon RF	25,600	3840	·	143	6.5	·	·	·	3			340	116.3	85.5	68.8	356
Fujifilm X-E5	£1299	5★	Attractive flat-bodied rangefinder-style model designed for enthusiasts	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	8	·	·		3	·	·	400	124.9	72.9	39.1	445
Fujifilm X-H2	£1899	5★	High-resolution pro flagship model with same design as X-H2S	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	7680	·	425	15	·	·		3	·	·	540	136.3	92.9	84.6	660
Fujifilm X-H2S	£2499	5★	Extremely impressive pro-spec high-speed flagship model	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	40	·	·		3	·	·	580	136.3	92.9	84.6	660
Fujifilm X-M5	£799	4.5★	Compact, affordable hybrid model with no viewfinder or in-body stabilisation	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	20		·		3	·	·	330	111.9	66.6	38	355
Fujifilm X-S20	£1249	5★	Excellent 26MP still/video hybrid camera that includes 6.2K video recording	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	20	·	·	·	3	·	·	750	127.7	85.1	65.4	491
NEW Fujifilm X-T30 III	£829		Updated compact DSLR-style model with improved autofocus and film dial	APS-C	26.1	Fujifilm X	51,200	6340	·	425	20	·	·	·	3	·	·	425	118.4	82.8	46.8	378
Fujifilm X-T50	£1299	5★	Small 40MP model with in-body stabilisation and film simulation dial	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	9	·	·	·	3	·	·	390	123.8	84	48.8	438
Fujifilm X-T5	£1699	5★	Retro-styled enthusiast model with 40MP sensor and subject-detection AF	APS-C	40.2	Fujifilm X	51,200	6240	·	425	15	·	·		3	·	·	580	129.5	91	63.8	557
Leica SL3	£5920	4.5★	High-end full-frame model gains phase detection AF and tilting screen	FF	60.1	L-mount	100,000	8192	·	315	15	·	·		3.2	·	·	260	141.2	108	84.6	854
Leica SL3-S	£4500	4★	More videocentric version of SL3 with 24MP sensor and 6K recording	FF	24.6	L-mount	200,000	5952	·	779	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	315	141.2	108	82.7	852
Nikon Z5	£1719	4★	Simplified version of the Z6, comes with compact 24-50mm f/4-6.3 zoom	FF	24.3	Nikon Z	102,400	3840	·	273	4.5	·	·		3.2	·	·	470	134	100.5	69.5	675
Nikon Z5II	£1599	5★	Impressively highly specified entry-level model at a very attractive price	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	273	14	·	·		3.2	·	·	380	134	100.5	72	700
Nikon Z6II	£1999	4.5★	Capable full-frame all-rounder but looking dated in 2025	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	273	14	·	·		3.2	·	·	410	134	100.5	69.5	705
Nikon Z6III	£2699	5★	Mid-range full-frame model boasts partially-stacked sensor for high speed	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	5376	·	273	20	·	·		3.2	·	·	380	138.5	101.5	74	760
Nikon Z7II	£2999	4.5★	Gains dual card slots, faster shooting, 4K 60p video and vertical grip option	FF	45.7	Nikon Z	102,400	3840	·	493	10	·	·		3.2	·	·	420	134	100.5	69.5	705
Nikon Z8	£3999	5★	Sensational all-rounder with all the Z 9's features in a smaller body	FF	45.7	Nikon Z	102,400	7680	·	493	20	·	·		3.2	·	·	340	144	118.5	83	910
Nikon Z9	£5299	5★	Stunning high-speed, high-resolution flagship with pro build and connectivity	FF	45.7	Nikon Z	102,400	7680	·	493	20	·	·		3.2	·	·	700	149	149.5	90.5	1340
Nikon Zf	£2299	4.5★	Lovely retro-styled full-frame mirrorless with all the latest technology	FF	24.5	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	273	14	·	·		3.2	·	·	380	144	103	49	710
Nikon Z30	£699	4★	Designed for vloggers, with articulated screen but no viewfinder	DX	20.9	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	209	11		·		3	·	·	330	128	73.5	59.5	405
Nikon Z50	£849	5★	Well-specified APS-C mirrorless model boasts excellent handling	DX	20.9	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	209	11	·	·	·	3.2	·	·	320	126.5	93.5	60	450
Nikon Z50II	£849	4.5★	Updated APS-C model gains improved autofocus and brighter viewfinder	DX	20.9	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	209	15	·	·	·	3.2	·	·	250	127	96.8	66.5	550
Nikon Zfc	£899	4★	Lovely-looking retro-styled model with fully articulated touchscreen	DX	20.9	Nikon Z	204,800	3840	·	209	11	·	·		3	·	·	300	134.5	93.5	43.5	445
Olympus OM-D E-M10 IV	£699	4.5★	Compact, lightweight, enjoyable to use and takes great-looking pictures	4/3	20.2	Mic4/3	25,600	3840		121	15	·	·	·	3	·	·	360	121.7	84.4	49	383
OM System OM-1 Mark II	£2200	5★	Updated with larger buffer, improved AF, and extra computational features	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	102,400	4096	·	1053	120	·	·		3	·	·	520	134.8	91.6	72.7	599
OM System OM-3	£1700	5★	Combines gorgeous retro design with most of the OM-1 Mark II's features	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	102,400	4096	·	1053	120	·	·		3	·	·	590	139.3	89.9	45.8	496
OM System OM-5	£1199	5★	Small, lightweight and weather-sealed camera gives great output	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	25,600	4096	·	121	10	·	·		3	·	·	310	125.3	85.2	49.7	414
OM System OM-5 Mark II	£1099	4.5★	Updated OM-5 gains USB-C charging port and some minor refinements	4/3	20.4	Mic4/3	25,600	4096	·	121	10	·	·		3	·	·	310	125.3	85.2	52.0	418

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

Mirrorless cameras

				SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS MOUNT	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	AF POINTS	BURST MODE (FPS)	VIEWFINDER	BUILT-IN WI-FI	FLASH	SCREEN SIZE (IN)	ARTICULATED LCD	TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	WIDTH (MM)	HEIGHT (MM)	DEPTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY							SHOOTING					SCREEN				DIMENSIONS			
Panasonic Lumix G9II	£1699	5★	High-end Micro Four Thirds model with phase-detection autofocus	4/3	25.2	Mic4/3	25,600	5760	·	779	14	·	·		3	·	·	390	134.3	102.3	90.1	658
Panasonic Lumix G97	£699	4★	Well-priced Micro Four Thirds camera is a minor update to the G90 from 2019	4/3	20.3	Mic4/3	25,600	3840	·	49	9	·	·	·	3	·	·	300	130.4	93.5	77.4	530
Panasonic Lumix G100	£590	4★	Small SLR-shaped camera specifically designed for vloggers	4/3	20.3	Mic4/3	25,600	3840	·	49	10	·	·	·	3	·	·	270	115.6	82.5	54.2	345
Panasonic Lumix GH5 II	£1499	4.5★	Video-focused high-end model with in-body stabilisation and 4K video	4/3	20.2	Mic4/3	25,600	4096	·	225	12	·	·		3	·	·	410	138.5	98.1	87.4	727
Panasonic Lumix GH6	£1999	5★	Impressive high-end video model with new 25MP sensor and 5.7K recording	4/3	25.2	Mic4/3	25,600	5728	·		14	·	·		3	·	·	330	138.4	100.3	99.6	823
Panasonic Lumix GH7	£1999	5★	Video-centric camera with phase-detect autofocus and internal ProRes RAW	4/3	25.2	Mic4/3	25,600	5760	·		15	·	·		3	·	·	330	138.4	100.3	99.6	805
Panasonic Lumix S1II	£2899		Pro model with 24MP stacked-CMOS sensor for high-speed stills and video	FF	24.1	L-mount	204,800	5952	·		70	·	·		3	·	·	360	134.3	102.3	91.8	800
Panasonic Lumix S1IIE	£2299	4.5★	'Essentials' version of the S1II with a conventional sensor but slower speeds	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·		30	·	·		3	·	·	380	134.3	102.3	91.8	795
Panasonic Lumix S1R II	£2999	5★	High-end stills-video hybrid camera, with phase-detect AF and 8K recording	FF	44.3	L-mount	102,400	8128	·		40	·	·		3	·	·	350	134.3	102.3	91.8	795
Panasonic Lumix S5D	£1000		Affordable compact-bodied, enthusiast-focused hybrid camera	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	4096	·	225	7	·	·		3	·	·	450	132.6	97.1	81.9	714
Panasonic Lumix S5II	£2000	4.5★	Compact model with phase detect autofocus and unlimited video recording	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·	779	9	·	·		3	·	·	370	134.3	102.3	90.1	740
Panasonic Lumix S5IIX	£2300	5★	Video-specialist version of the S5II boasts higher-quality recording options	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·	779	9	·	·		3	·	·	370	134.3	102.3	90.1	740
Panasonic Lumix S9	£1499		Small, rangefinder-styled full-frame camera designed for vlogging	FF	24.2	L-mount	204,800	5952	·	779	30		·		3	·	·	470	126	70.8	46.7	486
Sigma BF	£1969	4★	Stunningly designed, relatively compact model for photographers	FF	24.6	L-mount	102,400	6016			8				3.2		·	260	130.1	72.8	36.8	446
Sigma fp	£1999	4★	Smallest full-frame mirrorless, but compromised features and handling	FF	24.6	L-mount	102,400	3840	·	49	18				3.2		·	280	112.6	69.9	45.3	422
Sigma fp L	£1999	4★	High-resolution version of the fp with 61MP full-frame sensor	FF	61.0	L-mount	102,400	3840	·	49	10				3.2		·	240	112.6	69.9	45.3	427
Sony Alpha 6100	£830		Entry-level APS-C model with Sony's latest AF technology and 4K video	APS-C	24.2	Sony E	51,200	3840	·	425	11	·	·	·	3	·	·	380	120	66.9	59.4	396
Sony Alpha 6400	£1000	4★	Extraordinary new autofocus system, but in an outdated body design	APS-C	24.2	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	425	11	·	·	·	3	·	·	360	120	66.9	49.9	403
Sony Alpha 6600	£1450	4★	In-body stabilistion and impressive autofocus, but frustrating body design	APS-C	24.2	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	425	11	·	·		3	·	·	720	120	66.9	59	503
Sony Alpha 6700	£1450	4.5★	Boasts a 26MP sensor in a much-improved body compared to the A6600	APS-C	26	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	759	11	·	·		3	·	·	570	122	69	75.1	493
Sony Alpha 1	£6500	5★	High-end model with a remarkable combination of resolution and speed	FF	50.1	Sony E	102,400	7680	·	759	30	·	·		3	·	·	530	128.9	96.9	80.8	737
Sony Alpha 1 II	£6300	5★	High resolution, high-speed professional flagship model	FF	50.1	Sony E	102,400	7680	·	759	30	·	·		3.2	·	·	520	136.1	96.9	82.9	743
Sony Alpha 7 III	£1999	5★	Fine camera with 10fps shooting and 4K video recording	FF	24.2	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	693	10	·	·		3	·	·	610	126.9	95.6	73.7	650
Sony Alpha 7 IV	£2400	5★	Excellent all-rounder with 33MP sensor and fully articulated screen	FF	33.0	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	759	10	·	·		3	·	·	610	131	96.4	79.8	658
Sony Alpha 7C	£1900	3.5★	Compact full-frame design let down by poor handling and tiny EVF	FF	24.2	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	693	10	·	·		3	·	·	680	124	71.1	59.7	509
Sony Alpha 7C II	£2100	4★	Much-improved compact model, but still compromised in certain respects	FF	33.0	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	759	10	·	·		3	·	·	530	124	71.1	63.4	525
Sony Alpha 7CR	£3200	4★	High-resolution twin of the A7C II, with a 60MP sensor	FF	61.0	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	693	8	·	·		3	·	·	490	124	71.1	63.4	525
Sony Alpha 7R IV	£3500	5★	Superb high-resolution, full-frame mirrorless with 61MP sensor	FF	61.0	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	567	10	·	·		3	·	·	670	128.9	96.4	77.5	665
Sony Alpha 7R V	£4000	5★	61MP model gains subject detection, 8K video and 4-way articulated screen	FF	61.0	Sony E	102,400	7680	·	693	10	·	·		3.2	·	·	530	131.3	96.9	82.4	723
Sony Alpha 7S III	£3800	4.5★	Huge update gains fully articulated screen and new touch interface	FF	12.1	Sony E	409,600	3840	·	759	10	·	·		3	·	·	600	128.9	96.9	80.8	600
Sony Alpha 9 II	£4800		A9 gains professional connectivity options and an improved body design	FF	24.2	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	693	20	·	·		3	·	·	500	128.9	96.4	77.5	678
Sony Alpha A9 III	£6100	4.5★	World's first global shutter brings breathtaking speed – but at a price	FF	24.6	Sony E	51,200	3840	·	759	120	·	·		3.2	·	·	400	136.1	96.9	82.9	702
Sony ZV-E1	£2350	4★	Small full-frame vlogging camera, with articulated screen but no viewfinder	FF	12.1	Sony E	204,800	3840	·	759	10		·		3	·	·	570	121	71.9	54.3	483
Sony ZV-E10	£680	4★	Designed for vlogging, with high-end microphone and fully articulated screen	APS-C	24.2	Sony E	51,200	3840	·	425	11		·		3	·	·	440	113	64.2	44.7	343
Sony ZV-E10 II	£925	4★	Second-generation vlog camera with 26MP sensor and 4K 60p video recording	APS-C	26.0	Sony E	102,400	3840	·	759			·		3	·	·	610	114.5	67.5	54.2	377

DSLR cameras

NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS MOUNT	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	SHOOTING AF POINTS	 BURST MODE (FPS)	 VF COVERAGE (%)	 BUILT-IN WI-FI	 FLASH	SCREEN SCREEN SIZE (IN)	 ARTICULATED LCD	 TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	DIMENSIONS WIDTH (MM)	 HEIGHT (MM)	 DEPTH (MM)	 WEIGHT (G)
Canon EOS 2000D	£469	3★	Minor update to EOS 1300D gains 24.1MP sensor	APS-C	24.1	Canon EF	12,800	1080		9	3	95	·	·	3			500	129	101.3	77.6	475
Canon EOS 250D	£530	4★	Very compact entry-level DSLR with fully articulated screen and 4K video	APS-C	24.1	Canon EF	51,200	3840	·	9	5	95	·	·	3	·	·	1070	122.4	92.6	69.8	449
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV	£3599	4.5★	Hugely accomplished workhorse model, but pricey	FF	30.4	Canon EF	102,400	3840	·	61	7 7	100	·		3.2		·	900	151	116	76	890
Canon EOS-1D X Mark III	£6499		Super-fast pro model for sports and action photographers	FF	20.1	Canon EF	819,200	5496	·	191	16	100	·		3.2		·	2,850	158	167.6	82.6	1440
Nikon D780	£2199	5★	Superb all-rounder blends the best of DSLR and mirrorless technology	FX	24.5	Nikon F	204,800	3840	·	51	7	100	·		3.2	·	·	2,060	143.5	115.5	76	840
Nikon D850	£3499	5★	High speed and superb image quality make this the best DSLR yet	FX	45.7	Nikon F	102,400	3840	·	153	7	100	·		3.2	·	·	1,840	146	124	78.5	1005
Nikon D6	£6299		Latest pro-level high-speed sports camera boasts high-tech AF system	FX	20.8	Nikon F	3,280,000	3840	·	105	14	100	·		3.2		·	3,580	160	163	92	1450
Pentax KF	£849		Solid spec including fully articulated screen and in-body stabilisation	APS-C	24.2	Pentax K	102,400	1080		11	6	100	·	·	3	·		460	125.5	93	74	684
Pentax K-3 III	£1899	4★	Highly specified but pricey APS-C DSLR that boasts a large viewfinder	APS-C	25.7	Pentax K	1,600,000	3840	·	101	12	100	·		3.2		·	800	134.5	103.5	73.5	820
Pentax K-3 III Monochrome	£2249	4★	Specialist version of the K-3 III that only shoots in black & white	APS-C	25.7	Pentax K	1,600,000	3840	·	101	12	100	·		3.2		·	800	134.5	103.5	73.5	820
Pentax K-1 II	£1799	4.5★	Well-featured full-frame DSLR that's excellent value for money	FF	36	Pentax K	819,200	1080	·	33	4.4	100	·		3.2	·		670	136.5	110	85.5	1010

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

We've tried our hardest to ensure that the information in this guide is as complete and accurate as possible. However, some errors will inevitably have crept in along the way: if you spot one, please let us know by emailing ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk. Unfortunately we don't have space to list every single product on the market, so we don't include the most expensive speciality items. **Before making a purchase we advise you to check prices, along with any crucial specifications or requirements, with either a reputable retailer or the manufacturer's website.**

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Compact cameras

NAME & MODEL	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY	SENSOR SIZE	RESOLUTION (MP)	LENS RANGE (MM EQUIV)	MAX ISO	VIDEO	MIC INPUT	SHOOTING BURST MODE (FPS)	VIEWFINDER	BUILT-IN WI-FI	FLASH	SCREEN SCREEN SIZE (IN)	ARTICULATED LCD	TOUCHSCREEN	BATTERY LIFE (SHOTS)	DIMENSIONS WIDTH (MM)	HEIGHT (MM)	DEPTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
Canon G7 X Mark III	£699	4★	Lovely pocket camera that includes 4K video and YouTube live streaming	1in	20.1	24-100	25,600	3840	·	30		·	·	3in	·	·	265	105.5	60.9	41.4	304
Canon V1	£959	4★	Video-focused with ultra-wide zoom, but also interesting for photographers	1.4in	22.3	16-50	51,200	3840	·	15		·		3in	·	·	400	118.3	68.0	52.5	426
Canon V10	£429	3.5★	Unusual camera designed for vlogging, but has some significant limitations	1in	15.2	19	12,800	3840	·	na		·		2in	·	·	290	63.8	90.0	34.3	211
Fujifilm GFX100RF	£4699	4.5★	Surprisingly portable 102MP medium-format compact with 28mm equiv lens	MF	102	28	102,400	4096	·	6	·	·		3.2in	·	·	820	133.5	90.4	76.5	735
Fujifilm X half	£699	4★	Small JPEG-only camera that recreates experience of shooting half-frame film	1in	17.7	32	12,800	2160		na	·	·	·	2.4in		·	880	105.8	64.3	45.8	240
Fujifilm X100VI	£1599	5★	Superb classically styled camera gains 40MP sensor and image stabilisation	APS-C	40.2	35	51,200	6240	·	20	·	·	·	3in	·	·	450	128	74.8	55.3	521
Leica D-Lux 8	£1450	4.5★	Attractive design with Four Thirds sensor and 24-75mm equiv f/1.7-2.8 zoom	4/3	17	24-70	25,00	3840		11	·	·	·	3in		·	TBC	130	69	34	397
Leica Q2 Monochrom	£4995	5★	Variant of the Q2 with a modified sensor that only shoots in black & white	FF	47.3	28	100,000	4096		20	·	·		3in		·	350	130	80	91.9	734
Leica Q3	£5300	5★	Lovely top-end compact with 60MP full-frame sensor and 28mm f/1.7 lens	FF	60.3	28	100,000	8192		15	·	·		3in	·	·	350	130	80.3	92.6	743
Leica Q3 43	£5900	5★	Premium compact with 60MP full-frame sensor and 43mm f/2 lens	FF	60.3	43	100,000	8192		15	·	·		3in	·	·	350	130	80.3	97.6	772
Panasonic FZ1000 II	£700	4★	Updates FZ1000 with higher-resolution, touch-sensitive screen	1in	20.1	25-400	25,600	3840	·	12	·	·	·	3in	·	·	440	136.2	97.2	131.5	810
Panasonic FZ2000	£600	4.5★	Sophisticated bridge camera with strong focus on 4K video	1in	20.1	24-480	25,600	3840	·	12	·	·	·	3in	·	·	350	137.6	101.9	134.7	966
Ricoh GR III	£799	4★	Slimline, lightweight advanced compact with in-body image stabilisation	APS-C	24.2	28	102,400	1920		4		·		3in		·	200	109.4	61.9	33.2	257
Ricoh GR III HDF	£1049	4★	Variant of the GR III with switchable Highlight Diffusion Filter	APS-C	24.2	28	102,400	1920		4		·		3in		·	200	109.4	61.9	33.2	257
Ricoh GR IIIx	£899	4★	Variant of the GR III with new 40mm-equivalent f/2.8 lens	APS-C	24.2	40	102,400	1920		4		·		3in		·	200	109.4	61.9	35.2	262
Ricoh GR IIIx HDF	£1099	4★	Variant of the GR IIIx with switchable Highlight Diffusion Filter	APS-C	24.2	40	102,400	1920		4		·		3in		·	200	109.4	61.9	35.2	262
Ricoh GR IV	£1199	4.5★	Pocket-sized advanced compact gains updated lens and control layout	APS-C	25.7	28	204800	1920		4		·		3in		·	250	109.4	61.1	32.7	262
Sony RX1R III	£4199		Small-bodied full-frame camera with 35mm f/2 lens	FF	61	35	102,400	3840	·	5	·	·		3in		·	300	113.3	67.9	87.5	498
Sony RX10 IV	£1800	5★	Update to RX10 III with vastly improved shooting speed and autofocus	1in	20.1	24-600	12,800	3840	·	24	·	·	·	3in	·	·	400	132.5	94	144	1095
Sony RX100 VII	£1200	4.5★	Gains Sony's latest AI-based autofocus tech, including real-time eye AF	1in	20.1	24-200	12,800	3840	·	20	·	·	·	3in	·	·	260	101.6	58.1	42.8	302
Sony ZV-1	£700	4★	Designed for vloggers, with high-spec mic and fully articulated screen	1in	20.1	25-70	12,800	3840	·	24		·		3in	·	·	260	105.5	60	43.5	294
Sony ZV-1 Mark II	£870	4.5★	Updated vlog camera gains ultra-wideangle zoom and touchscreen interface	1in	20.1	18-50	12,800	3840	·	24		·		3in	·	·	290	105.5	60	46.7	292
Sony ZV-1F	£550		Simplified version of the ZV-1 with fixed 20mm equivalent prime lens	1in	20.1	20	12,800	3840	·	16		·		3in	·	·	360	105.5	60	46.4	256

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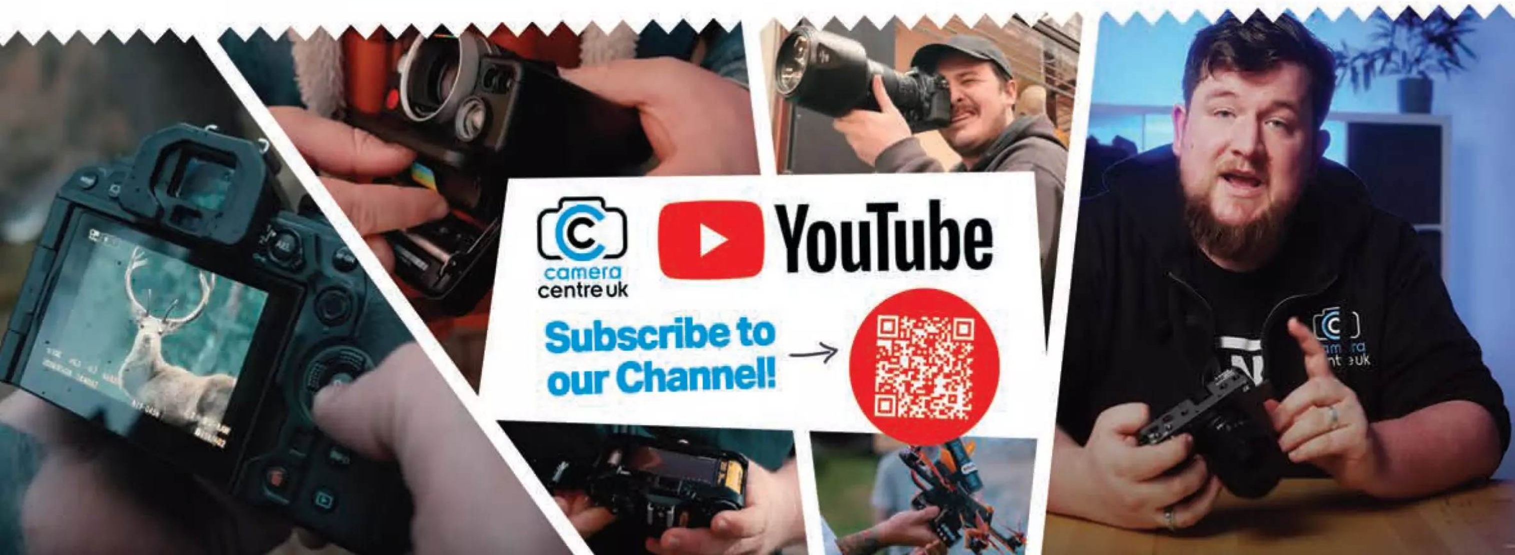

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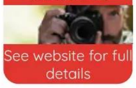

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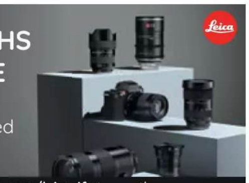

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D500 body
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MC-36A rem..£149 MC-30A rem	£79

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10-24 F3.5/4.5 AFS box	£349
12-24 F4 AFS DX	£199
14-24 F2.8 AFS	£599
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16-80 F2.8/4 VR DX	£499
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18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS	£299
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24-70 F2.8 AFS box	£599
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28-300 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR box	£599
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35 F1.8 AFS ED	£299
35 F2.8 AFD	£299
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50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
50 F1.8 AFD	£69
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55-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS DX VR	£229
70-200 F2.8 E FL AFS box	£1399
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70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR	£299
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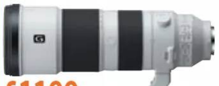
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35 F2 XF WR	£299
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503CW body box	£1999
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75 F4.5 box.	£499
90-180 F5.6	£399
100 F4 macro box	£599
120 F3.5 soft focus	£299
135 F4 macro	£299
165 F2.8.......£199 165 F4 leaf	£379
300 F4 latest	£199
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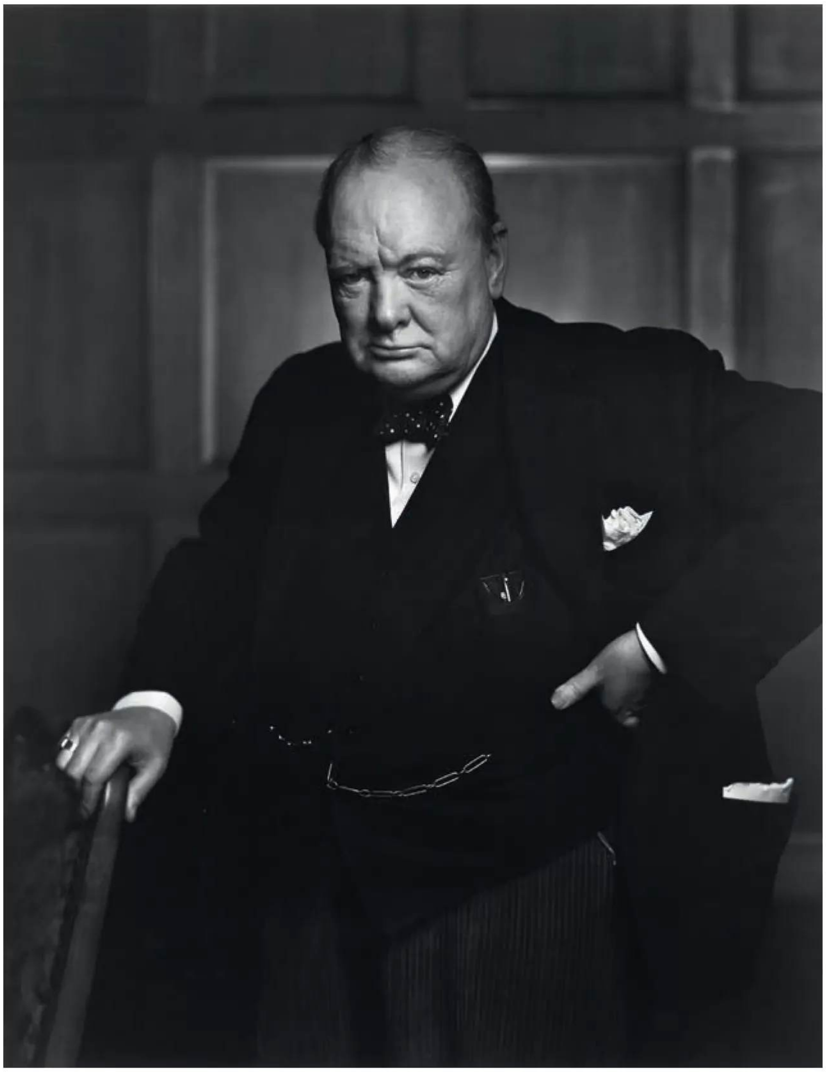
Final Analysis

John Wade considers...

The Roaring Lion by Yousuf Karsh, 1941



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If you're wondering where you've seen this portrait – or at least part of it – before, look in your wallet. It's the picture that has adorned five pound notes in the UK since 2016 when the old paper fivers changed to the current polymer-printed types. The picture, however, was taken 75 years before that. It is, of course, a portrait of Winston Churchill (he wouldn't become Sir Winston until 1953), leader of the coalition government during World War II and famous for his rousing speeches that did so much to inspire British people during those dark times. When the war ended in 1945, he was voted out of office as a Labour government took control, but returned to lead a Conservative government in 1951.

Yousuf Karsh was an Armenian refugee who arrived in Canada in 1923 to live with, and work as an assistant to, his photographer uncle. He served an apprenticeship with distinguished Boston portrait photographer John Garo, who taught him the technical aspects of photography while encouraging him to study art. He did so and became enamoured by the paintings of Rembrandt. In 1931 he set up his own studio in Ottawa and soon became known for his theatrical portraits. This picture, which became known as the Roaring Lion, was taken during the stateman's visit to the Canadian parliament. It's the one that really brought Karsh's name to fame.

Subtle details

Google 'Portrait Of An Old Man Rembrandt' and you'll see clear influences. The Rembrandt painting and the Karsh photograph are both defined by their dramatic lighting in which clothing and extraneous details almost, but never quite, disappear into the shadows, while face, hands, the glint on the watch chain, the handkerchief and slither of shirt which subtly directs the viewer's eye to the face are brightly lit. Look at Churchill's face, and see how side lighting allows it to fall partly into shadow, while adding texture to his features. And here's another small importance: the catchlights in the eyes. If you don't mind defacing your copy of AP, take a black pen and touch out those tiny pin-pricks of light to see how vital that minuscule, almost infinitesimal, detail is to the facial composition.

For Karsh, composition and lighting were everything, and in that he spent time positioning hands in ways that conveyed the character of his sitters just as much as their facial expressions. Look at other examples of the photographer's work and you'll see hands falling naturally relaxed into laps; sometimes holding an accessory that might be associated with the subject; other times with fingers wrapped around the face; fists clenched as if in anger or fingers gently extended in a dance-like pose; all depending on the sitter's personality. Everything is planned, lit and executed with the precision that made Karsh one of the most famous and sought-after portrait photographers of his time.

Legend has it that seconds before this picture was taken, Karsh snatched a cigar from Churchill's mouth, resulting in the expression that has made this image perhaps one of the most famous pictures of the great man. The story might be merely apocryphal, but it's almost too good not to be true.

John Wade is best known for his regular contributions to AP on classic cameras. He is the author of 25 books on social and photographic history. Find him at **www.johnwade.org**

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